

SLAVERY PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: 9th Global Meeting

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

June 26-28, 2025



McKINNEY
SCHOOL OF LAW
Indianapolis



**VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
AMSTERDAM**

Slavery Past, Present and Future: 9th Global Meeting

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Time: 4:00: Boat Tour on Amsterdam canals focusing on Dutch slavery footprint (with Black Heritage Tours)

Start and end location: Amsterdam Central Station pier



Suggested arrival time: 3:45

Boarding time: 4:00

Duration: 1.5 hours

Boat Tour Information:

- Amisah Bakuri will meet participants outside Amsterdam Central Station (located on the opposite side of the 13 and 17 tram stop). She will be holding up a sign for easy identification.
- **NOTE:** *This is a public dock; therefore, the boats are not allowed to park; so, when the boat arrives, our group will need to board immediately.*
- Once on board the boat, after a brief introduction, our tour journey will begin - traveling through the main canals while exploring the 'hidden colonial history' of the city and the his/her stories of the early presence of 'free and not free' people from Africa and the East & West Indies, that are visible on canal houses, monuments and [UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#).
- There will be drinks and small snacks on board or we are welcome to bring ours too.
- There is a toilet on the boat; however, we also suggest using the bathroom before the tour.

Dinner:

Axum Restaurant

Blasiusstraat 62H, 1091CV Amsterdam

<https://www.axumrestaurant-amsterdam.nl/contact>

Friday, June 27, 2025

School of Religion and Theology, VU Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, fifteenth floor, A wing, room 16 (15A-16)

- 9:00 Conference Registration
- 9:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks
Steering Committee
- 9:40 Welcome by host institution, Prof. Dion A. Forster –Vrije Universiteit,
Amsterdam
- 9:50 “Rules of the Road”

Panels are organized as follows:

- 10 minutes speaking time per speaker

- 20 minutes of Q & A

Discussions will continue throughout the coffee and lunch breaks.

10:00 Session 1: Unforgetting and Reclaiming the Past I

Chair: Sheetal Shah

AWINE Emmanuel John A., “Hassana, Not Adwoa”: African Identity, Collective Responsibility and Victimhood in the Slave Trade, 1800-1930

SCALLY Rachael, Dublin’s Forgotten Slavery Past

ANAND Beryl, Slavery, Abolition and Missionaries in Western Colonial India

10:50 Coffee Break/ Breather

- 11.20 **Session 2: Unforgetting and Reclaiming the Past II**
Chair: Amisah Bakuri
- MARCELINO Taryn, Dom Tom Com: Newsletters of Resistance in French Organizing
- AMES Aysha, Fighting Erasure
- BARNES Kristen, Monuments, Memory, Enslavement, and International Law
-
- 12:10 **Lunch**
-
- 1.10 **Session 3: Modern Forms of Enslavement: Definitions and Voices**
Chair: Ngozie Ndulue
- COOK Blanche, Sex Trafficking Is Not Slavery
- EVADZI Charlotte Biney, Trauma, Resilience, And Survival: Mara's Story In Amma Darko's Beyond The Horizon
- DEIGH Linda and OBENG Josef-Israel, Voices of the Enslaved Through Storytelling
-
- 2:00 **Coffee Break/ Breather**
-
- 2:30 **Session 4: Seeing the Enslaved -- Through Other Eyes (Darkly)**
Chair: Kevin Brown
- BRAVO Karen E., Jamaica's Slaveocracy Through the Eyes of Thomas Thistlewood and Matthew Lewis
- PALLUA Ulrich, The Rhetoric of Inferiority of African Slaves in John Fawcett's Obi; or Three-Fingered Jack (1800) Re-evaluated in Charlie Haffner's Amistad Kata-Kata (1987)
- AKBARI Zeinab, Segregation and Race: African and Iranian Slave Boys in the Qajar Court

3:20 **Coffee Break/ Breather**

3:50 **Session 5: Conceptual and Structural Systems of Control and Their Reverberations I**

Chair: Cecily Banks

PIGOTT Justin, Owning Slaves Without Sinning: Gregory of Nyssa's Fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes

VOS Ida, Role of Religion in Dutch Free Womb Discussions

SECOMANDI Fernando, Recasting the Master-Slave Dialectic: Data Work, AI, and New Forms of Subjugation and Emancipation

4:40 **End of Day Discussions**

5:00 **End Day 2 Sessions**



Saturday, June 28th, 2025

School of Religion and Theology, VU Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, fifteenth floor, A wing, room 16 (15A-16)

8:30 Session 6: Conceptual and Structural Systems of Control and Their Reverberations II

Chair: Rachael Scally

BANKS Cecily, The Inescapable Paradoxes: The Illusions of Freedom of Movement and Mobility, the Architectures of Control and Captivity

WILSON Catherine, Modern Slavery and Financial Institutions

JOHNSON Deborah L., Insuring Slavery, Ensuring Inequality: The Legacy of Enslavement in the Insurance Industry and Its Lasting Impact on Access, Coverage, and Business Protection in the U.S., U.K., and Caribbean

9.20 Coffee Break/ Breather

9:50 Session 7: Exploring America's Peculiar Institution

Chair: Ulrich Pallua

BULLA David W., Abolitionist Angst Over the Re-Election Of Abraham Lincoln In 1864

RIBIANZKY Nik, "The Irish Turned Out Pretty Strong Today": African Americans and the Irish in Natchez, Mississippi

BURR Sherri, Generational Impact of Enslavement: The Divergent Legacies of George and Martha Washington

10:40 Coffee Break/ Breather

11:10 **Session 8: Diasporic Identities and (Re)Connections**

Chair: Karen E. Bravo

SMITH-HOLLADAY Zoe, The Waters of the Black Atlantic: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Symbolism of the Sea in the Arts of the African Diaspora

HAMMOND Nii, In the Courtyard of your conscience: Enslavement, Heritage Performance and Ancestral Disconnect

BAKURI Amisah, Oppression and Resistance: Culinary Practices and Afro-Diasporic Identities

12:00 **Lunch**

1:00 **Session 9: Legacies: The System Is Working as Intended**

Chair: Emmanuel John A. Awine

NDULUE Ngozi, Ending the Modern U.S. Death Penalty, Confronting a Continuing Legacy of Slavery

SMITH Catherine, Black Children and Caste

JEFFERSON-BULLOCK Jalila, Slavery and Policing

1:50 **Coffee Break/ Breather**

2:20 **Session 10: Legacies and Resistance**

Chair: David W. Bulla

ALENICHEV Arsenii, 'We can see a savage': AI's Colonial Epistemology and Gaze in Captioning Archival Photos of Human Zoos

BREWER Tiffany Williams and BREWER Eric, Transgenerational Trauma and Its Impact on Lawyer Wellness and Civility

BROWN Kevin, How Caste Discrimination in South Asia and Enslavement Of Black People In The Us Became United Under Federal Anti-Discrimination

3:10 **Coffee Break/ Breather**

3:40 **Session 11: Legacies and Resistance II**

Chair: Sherri Burr

KEENAN Patrick, Lessons from the International Criminal Court on
Reparations for Chattel Slavery

CHATMAN Carliss, The American Reparations Trust

4:20 **Closing discussions and Conference Development**

5:00 **Conference Ends**



SLAVERY PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: 9th Global Meeting PARTICIPANTS

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Alenichev, Arsenii Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp	10
Ames, Aysha Fordham Law School	2
Anand, Beryl Central University of Gujarat	1
Awine, Emmanuel John A. Johns Hopkins University	1
Bakuri, Amisah Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	8
Banks, Cecily Boston University School of Law	6
Barnes, Kristen Syracuse University College of Law	2
Bravo, Karen E. Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law	4
Brewer, Eric Howard University School of Law	10
Brewer, Tiffany Williams Howard University School of Law	10
Brown, Kevin Joseph Rice School of Law at the University of South Carolina & Indiana University Maurer School of Law	10
Bulla, David W. Augusta University	7

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Pallua, Ulrich University of Innsbruck	4
Pigott, Justin University of Leicester	5
Ribianszky, Nik Queen's University Belfast	7

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Secomandi, Fernando Delft University of Technology	5
Smith, Catherine Washington and Lee University School of Law	9
Smith-Holladay, Zoe SOAS University of London	8
Vos, Ida Erasmus University Rotterdam	5
Wilson, Catherine University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law	6



Session 1

Unforgetting and Reclaiming the Past I

Awine, Emmanuel John A.

“We don’t see ourselves as one people,” Mma explained, emphasizing the primacy of identity. “We identify as Kanyase, Lepo or Singbung.” A few months later, Mma’s community would confront the erasure of their identities as they are raided and sold into the hands of one Mr. Wofa Sargong. Mr. Wofa Sargong had brought them from the north of the Gold Coast and assigned them new names to conceal their true origins from inspectors. He renamed Hassana as Adwoa Sargong, Aminah as Yaa Sargong. However, Hassana resisted this erasure, insisting, “I am Hassana, I am from Botu, I am the second daughter of Baba Yero and Aminah Na”

This paper examines African consciousness, collective responsibility, victimhood, and resistance within the transatlantic slave trade, challenging prevailing narratives of African complicity. It builds on David Eltis’ argument that concepts such as Africa, Africans, and Blackness were not operative in Africa and should not be retroactively applied. While acknowledging this perspective, the paper provides empirical evidence of victimhood by highlighting how raided ethnic groups, preyed upon by Europeans and their African collaborators, responded to their victimization. By using archival records, traditional sources and secondary literature, the paper critically interrogates the notion of collective responsibility. It argues that framing the participation of a few African elites in the transatlantic slave trade as monolithic African complicity obscures the sufferings endured by those directly impacted by the slave trade in Africa.

Keywords: Victimhood, Resistance, Slavery, Suffering Identity, Collective Responsibility, Gold Coast

The Royal Dublin Society's Forgotten Legacies of Enslavement

Scally, Rachael

In contrast to British port cities such as Liverpool and Bristol, Dublin is widely regarded as a city untarnished by the legacy of enslavement. Walking through the streets of Dublin, it can be hard to envisage that Ireland's capital was once an imperial city and the fact that the capital has a long and lucrative association with enslavement and empire appears to have slipped from memory.

This paper will examine the Royal Dublin Society's legacies of enslavement and highlight Dublin's role as a major city of the British Empire during the height of the eighteenth century.

I am in the process of preparing a detailed report based on primary historical research, which will document for the first time the Society's extensive and complex connections with empire. This paper will provide a brief introduction to the project and present some of its initial findings. It will examine how the Society's members and alumni benefited financially from the ownership of enslaved people and the transatlantic economy. It will also examine how the Society actively promoted industries that profited from the violence and cruelty of the plantation economy.

Keywords: Dublin; Ireland; Empire; Enslavement; Transatlantic trade in enslaved people; Royal Dublin Society



Slavery, Abolition and Missionaries in Western Colonial India

Anand, Beryl

This paper is an attempt at rethinking the discourse on slavery carefully crafted by nationalist historians in India. India had a centuries old caste system wherein Adivasis (indigenous people) who were assimilated into the caste system became Untouchables and worked as agrarian slaves. East India Company records before the Indian Slavery Act 1833 suggests that there was a system of slavery in existence across Western India. The proposed project will introduce this topic with extensive research on the archival sources and official documents of the East India Company records. Telling is the fact that the 'Report on Slavery in India', 1841 authorized by the House of Commons is absent from all of Government of India's archives and libraries.



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Session 2

Dom Tom Com: Newsletters of Resistance in French Organizing

Marcelino, Taryn

Nantes, France, a location that fueled the transatlantic slave trade with its slave ship-building operations, is a site where the memory of slavery is currently being negotiated between municipal entities and local organizations. France has been in turmoil about the question of memorialization, particularly in the post-BLM era, where people have linked contemporary French racial injustices with its' history of slavery. Although much attention has been placed upon Paris, throughout the field of Black France, this paper will focus on how the history of slavery continues to haunt France's present and how local African and Caribbean organizing groups fight for the memory of slavery within public space.

This paper will focus on how local African and Caribbean organizing groups are framed as radical in their fight for the memory of slavery within public space, particularly with their connection to Black Feminist organizing in the U.S. and their continual interpellation of American civil rights figures. One particularly influential local organization, Mémoire de l'Outre-Mer has been a major actor in the memory scene in Nantes. This paper will utilize a literary analysis examining their newsletters, called the DOM TOM COM, which I argue articulate their conception of race in France through a theoretical framework of global blackness, as they push for Nantes to recognize its slave-trading past.

These newsletters are an ephemeral resonance of this organization in Nantes' cultural landscape. They document the yearly movements and activities of Black activism in Nantes from 1995 to 2015 and demonstrate how Mémoire de l'Outre-Mer ruptures the memory landscape of Nantes. I assert that local organizations in Nantes, particularly Memoire de l'Outre-Mer, negotiate with the colorblind norm of French Universalism through interpellating U.S. racial struggles and their "radical" suggestion that Blackness is a factor in the racism they experience in France today.

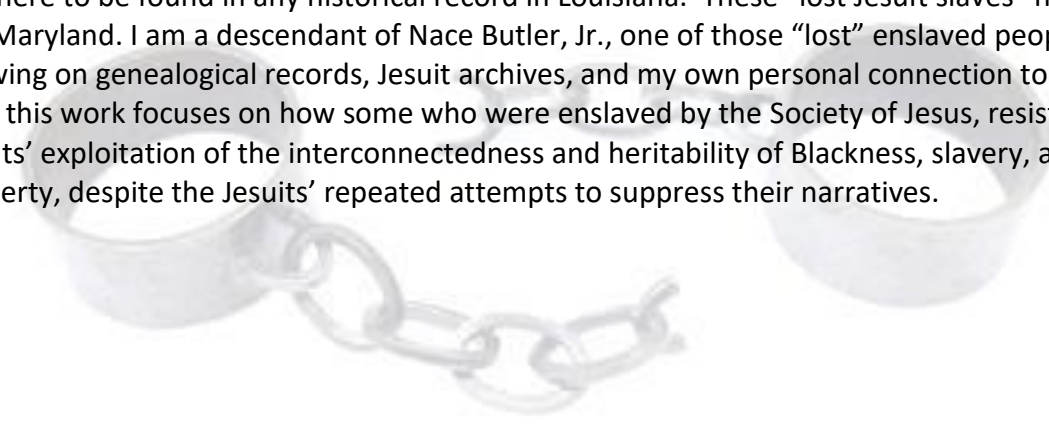
Keywords: memory, organizing, memorialization, transatlantic slave trade, newsletters, Black France

Fighting Erasure

Ames, Aysha

This is a time of shifting and suppressed narratives – from attacks on the telling of history to the disinformation campaigns. These attacks are not new. One dominant narrative that continues to endure is the Catholic value of communal good over individual liberty. For centuries, to be Catholic has been proclaimed as the religion of resistance in America -- resisting a narrative of Protestantism and capitalism. To be sure, Catholics have faced both oppression and persecution. However, often missing from the narrative are those Catholics oppressed in furtherance of their mission. One notable instance is the Jesuit order's participation in slavery.

On June 19, 1838, the Maryland Jesuits and Georgetown College sold more than 272 enslaved people from Jesuit-owned plantations in southern Maryland to plantation owners in southern Louisiana. The school sold the enslaved men, women, and children to cover some of its debts, and the sale was incremental in supporting the school and expanding Catholicism in America. Approximately one-third of the enslaved people sold, 91 in all, were nowhere to be found in any historical record in Louisiana. These "lost Jesuit slaves" never left Maryland. I am a descendant of Nace Butler, Jr., one of those "lost" enslaved people. Drawing on genealogical records, Jesuit archives, and my own personal connection to the sale, this work focuses on how some who were enslaved by the Society of Jesus, resisted the Jesuits' exploitation of the interconnectedness and heritability of Blackness, slavery, and property, despite the Jesuits' repeated attempts to suppress their narratives.



Monuments, Memory, Enslavement, and International Law

Barnes, Kristen

In the United States and Europe denials of historical truths and efforts to erase memories connected to slavery are prevalent. Yet making the connection between past and present is essential to our humanity and survival. This paper concerns the transatlantic slave trade, memory, and international law. With respect to international law, I analyze its potential to preserve sites of significance concerning enslavement, to disseminate knowledge, to support the recognition or creation of new sites of memorialization, and to prevent future atrocities. I will draw upon several documents and international treaties including, the UN Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the UN Economic and Social Council Committee's General Comment No. 21, Right of Everyone to take Part in Cultural Life, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and scholar Tendayi Achiume's 2019 Report on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racial Intolerance.

I will focus on several sites including Gorée Island, the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park in Alabama, Fers-Hommage au General Dumas in Paris, the Mémorial de L'Abolition de L'esclavage in Nantes, Ghana's slave castle museum, and the unmarked burial ground of formerly enslaved Africans in St. Helena to examine:

- the significance of marking and preserving sites of slavery and resistance;
- the potential of the international legal framework to the project of provoking and preserving memories about enslavement and why international involvement is relevant;
- the significance of the location of the sites;
- who should have a voice in the form that memorialization takes; and
- the relationship between monuments and sites of enslavement to reparations and healing.

Keywords: monuments, international law

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Session 3

Sex Trafficking Is Not Slavery

Cook, Blanche

Sex trafficking is abhorrent and despicable. Sex trafficking, however, is not slavery. The transatlantic slave trade is distinguishable in its size, scope, and impact. An entire labyrinth of laws, case law, doctrines, statutes, and constitutional provisions enslaved an entire class of people for over 300 years with reverberating effects in the present. That is not sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking and slavery are distinct, despite some shared characteristics. Both sex trafficking and slavery involve severe exploitation and suffering, but they arise from different contexts and mechanisms.

The transatlantic slave trade was indeed an institution built into the very fabric of the United States and other societies. It was not merely an economic system but a deeply entrenched political and legal system that lasted for centuries, with legal systems, policies, and social constructs ensuring the subjugation and exploitation of enslaved people for centuries and generations. It was an explicitly sanctioned, codified form of racial and economic oppression that shaped the foundations of the United States economy and society.

On the other hand, sex trafficking, while a modern-day form of exploitation, occurs within different legal, political, and economic structures. It is illegal and falls within the realm of criminal economic enterprises, driven by demand and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals. While it shares the exploitative nature of slavery, sex trafficking operates within a framework of illicit activity, often involving organized crime or individuals who prey on those in desperate circumstances. It is not a political institution supported by law; it is criminal, covert, and often hidden from view.

The language used to describe sex trafficking is crucial. By calling it "modern-day slavery," there is a risk of downplaying the specific historical context and devastating impact of the transatlantic slave trade, which was not merely about individual suffering but the systemic and legal enslavement of entire groups of people across generations. This comparison can obscure the important distinctions between these two forms of exploitation.

Instead, sex trafficking should be defined for what it is: a criminal and exploitative economic system that thrives on vulnerabilities that inequities create. This framing can also highlight the need for systemic reform, not just in addressing the criminal acts of trafficking itself but in addressing the root causes such as poverty, inequality, lack of opportunity, and systemic failures in protection.

By focusing on the specific legal, social, and economic dynamics of sex trafficking, we can more effectively identify solutions to combat it, while also respecting the historical gravity of slavery and the lasting effects it has had on society.

Trauma, Resilience, and Survival: Mara's Story in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*

Evadzi, Charlotte Biney

The subject of slavery although prohibited hundreds of years ago still manifests in more subtle and hidden ways. Scholars, including Hazel Feigenblatt, categorize contemporary slavery into; "sexual slavery, forced labour, forced domestic labour, forced marriage and organ trafficking, and forced surrogacy" (34-46). This paper intends to focus on the sexual slavery that Mara in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* experienced. The paper contends that sexual slavery causes psychological trauma to its victims and in the long run, affects their identity. The study adopts a qualitative approach using a close reading and Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectional feminist theory and Judith Herman's notion of trauma theory to unearth deeper insights into Mara's traumatic ordeal. The contributing factors to Mara's psychological traumas, and how Mara survives the oppression of slavery will be analyzed. The paper points out how Mara represents the product of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and yet a resilient woman who takes charge of her own life.

Keywords: Contemporary slavery, Sexual slavery, psychological burden, emotional abuse



Voices of the Enslaved through Storytelling

Deigh, Linda and Obeng, Josef-Israel

There are important yet fragmented discussions on human trafficking, modern-day slavery, domestic abuse, and illegal migration. The exploitation of vulnerable populations and the rise of neo-slavery are significant but often overlooked contributors to social issues at the grassroots level within our communities. Yet, there seems to be a canyon between perceptions of worldview and the lived experiences of victims and the few survivors. Additionally, there are actors such as non-governmental organisations, researchers, and governmental entities who assert that the detrimental effects of these issues must be addressed, and structures put in place for prevention. Evidently, changing worldview narratives is inherently challenging, due to the perceived disconnect between individuals' lived experiences and the tangible impact on their economic and social well-being. The concept of storytelling suggests that it can serve to bridge the gap in relating to one another and foster change. This longitudinal study explores the role of storytelling in sustainably influencing positive social change in worldview narratives and attitudes of communities. The study which is retrospective in nature will use a digital platform to present story-based treatments from voices of real survivors and response to action from us in the world, its stakeholders and actors.

The main findings of the study will provide evidence on the social changes that occur because of the narratives' call to action. The implication is to create awareness and effect action across stakeholders such as us, community leaders, non-government agencies, social advocates, and policymakers to positively respond to the welfare of the communities at risk.

Keywords: storytelling, narratives, social issues, social change, societal welfare, survivors

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Session 4

Jamaica's Slaveocracy Through the Eyes of Thomas Thistlewood and Matthew Lewis

Bravo, Karen E.

This paper compares the experiences of two Jamaican slaveowners of the 18th century, Thomas Thistlewood (1721-1786) and Mathew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818) to explore the construction and normalization of systems of oppression in Jamaica's slaveocracy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Both Thistlewood and Lewis were diarists who wrote about their experiences in Jamaica. Using the texts Douglas Hall, *IN MISERABLE SLAVERY: THOMAS THISTLEWOOD IN JAMAICA 1750-1786* (1999) and Judith Terry (ed.), *MATTHEW LEWIS: JOURNAL OF A WEST INDIA PROPRIETOR* (1999), the paper addresses Thistlewood's and Lewis's paths to Jamaican slaveholder status, their descriptions of their fellow enslavers and the enslaved persons who they owned and/or encountered, and their philosophies and experiences as slaveowners.

Addressing the interconnection of the Jamaican slaveocracy and the British Empire and aspects of the slaveocracy itself, the paper depicts the "thickness" of the relationship between Jamaican slavery and British society and economy of their time. And, gazing "darkly" through the eyes of the enslavers, the paper attempts to "see" the enslaved -- the lives lived in juxtaposition and conjunction with each other and the enslavers, including such aspects as mortality, gender roles, agency in enslavement, violence, and resistance.

The Rhetoric of Inferiority of African Slaves in John Fawcett's *Obi; or, Three-Fingered Jack* (1800) Re-evaluated in Charlie Haffner's *Amistad Kata-Kata* (1987)

Pallua, Ulrich

Abstract: John Fawcett's *Obi; or, Three-Finger'd Jack* (1800) draws a distorted picture of the life of slaves in Jamaica. This paper investigates the ambivalence in this distortion as Fawcett creates two kinds of slaves by pitting them against each other: the loyal and obedient slaves (but still inferior) vs. the superstitious-ridden and rebellious slaves deeply rooted in old traditions, thus considered inferior, uneducated, immoral and dangerous. The juxtaposition of what I call 'anglicised' slaves instrumentalised by the coloniser and the heathen 'savages' that are beyond the reach of the imperial ideology enables Fawcett to substantiate the claim that Christianity successfully promotes slaves to 'anglicised' mimic men/women who are then able to carry out its mission: to eradicate the pagan practice of obeah, three-finger'd Jack, and all those slaves that threaten the stability of the coloniser's superiority. Charlie Haffner's play *Amistad Kata-Kata* (1987) is about the heroism of Shengbe Pieh and his fellow slaves on board the *La Amistad*: on their way to the colonies they revolted, were sent to prison, tried, finally freed, and taken back home after 3 years. The paper shows how Haffner repositions the 'Amistad trope' in the 20th century by effacing the materiality of the body of the African slaves, thus re-evaluating the corporeality of the colonised slave in the 19th-century post-abolition debate by coming to terms with the cultural trauma post-independent African collective identity has been experiencing. The re-staging of the play by the 'Freetong Players' in 2007/8 commemorated the bicentenary of the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, a unique opportunity to direct the attention to asserting the identity of 'Post-European' Africa.

Keywords: Slavery Studies, Post-European Identity, Body, Materiality, Ideology

Segregation and Race: African and Iranian Slave Boys in the Qajar Court

Akbari, Zeinab

Boy slavery phenomenon in Iran and during the Qajar period (1789-1925) constitutes an important part of domestic slavery among the elites and courtiers. At the heart of this phenomenon, there is a strong element of segregation which mainly focuses on the opposition between Iranian and African slave boys. The subject of racial segregation in Iran and during the Qajar period has received some attention in recent years. These studies, however, mainly discuss African men and women in bondage and in the context of physical labor. Therefore, further research is needed on the racial segregation between African and Iranian slave boys in this period, particularly among the elite families. This paper will take on the question of the distinct roles and functions of African and Iranian slave boys in the Qajar period, based on their different races. Due to the difficulty of differentiating between these boys in primary sources-where racial identification is often absent- visual material give us detailed information regarding slave boys' race and also their responsibilities. To closely examine their different duties, this article will employ a critical approach to the silences surrounding Iranian slavery. Despite some similarities in their functions, racial segregation is evident in practices such as castration, the use of derogatory names based on skin color, and the treatment of African slave boys as luxury items to display wealth.

Keywords: Iran, Qajar, Racial Segregation, African, Iranian, Slave Boys, Visual Material



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Session 5

Owning Slaves Without Sinning: Gregory of Nyssa's Fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes

Pigott, Justin

While giving a homily on slave ownership, the fourth-century bishop Gregory of Nyssa reminded his congregation that humankind was created in the image of God. Gregory went on to ask his audience, who then could be so prideful as to think that they have the authority to buy or sell God? This seeming condemnation of the slave trade went unnoticed for many centuries, that is, until it was employed by abolitionist writers of the 19th century as a succinct riposte to those who were using Christian literature in a defence of slavery. Indeed, Gregory's argument that the image of God cannot be bought or sold has since earned him the epithet of proto-abolitionist amongst historians of both modern and ancient slavery. However, this paper argues that Gregory's argument was neither as radical or novel. He was not calling the entire institution of slavery into question or promoting manumission. But neither was he engaging in empty rhetoric. At the core of this reinterpretation is the idea of ownership. Gregory's passionate attack on the conceit that humans could own the image of God raises an important question about early Christian slave ownership: what parts of the human was understood to be owned? Gregory, like his Christian contemporaries and Greek forebears, believed it was the body alone that was the property of the master, while the slave's soul answered only to the divine master. As such, Gregory was admonishing those owners who acted as if they owned not just the body but also the souls of their slaves. By reassessing the homily with a focus on the intersection of the enslaved body and the slave's soul, Gregory's argument is transformed from an anomaly that goes against the grain of late-antique slavery, to a key to understanding early-Christian slavery as a whole.

Role of religion in Dutch free womb discussions

Vos, Ida

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, laws that freed children born to enslaved mothers, were adopted in many regions in the Americas. While the Netherlands never adopted such a “free womb” law, it was under consideration multiple times between 1825 and the abolition of slavery in 1863. This paper focuses on the role of religion in these discussions. The Dutch elite was predominantly Protestant, although the extent to which this determined their political ideology differed. At the same time, Jewish thinkers also participated in free womb discussions. Overall, many arguments for abolition were based on humanitarian concerns, justified by Christian principles. This paper takes a trans-imperial approach. By the time the Dutch were considering free womb, other regions with various religious majorities had already adopted it. Many calls for free womb in the Netherlands referenced these other regions, like predominantly Catholic countries in South America.

This paper is based on the public discourse around free womb. For this, I used a wide range of primary sources like parliamentary debates, newspaper articles, books, magazine articles and petitions that include discussions of free womb. Because of both the large size of this corpus of sources and the difficulty in finding free womb discussions – there is no Dutch equivalent to the term “free womb” – I used digital methods to find the specific parts of the sources dedicated to free womb discussions.

Keywords: Free womb, Religion, Abolitionism, Gender, Slavery, Digital humanities



Recasting the Master-Slave Dialectic: Data Work, AI, and New Forms of Subjugation and Emancipation

Secomandi, Fernando

The proposed paper explores G.W.F. Hegel's ([1807] 2018) account of the master-slave dialectic to potentially characterize data work outsourced by Big Tech corporations to the Global South as a modern form of slavery. This argument is developed in two parts. In part one, I offer an innovative interpretation of Hegel's influential text from a design perspective. I argue that the emergence and eventual emancipation of the servile self-consciousness fundamentally depend on the coerced labor of giving form to a technical object for the satisfaction of others. Additionally, I examine recent critiques of the master-slave dialectic, particularly its role in supporting Hegel's justification of European racism and colonialism (e.g., Jaarte 2024).

In part two, I expand upon these insights in light of contemporary cases of AI design. Drawing on secondary sources across multiple cases and contexts (e.g., Bonini and Tréré 2024), I examine the extent to which the essential features of the master-slave dialectic resonate with the experiences of data workers who help give form to AI for consumer use. My focus is on findings that challenge Hegel's account of the dialectic, particularly highlighting how emancipation by the oppressed may follow trajectories other than one initially predicated on total submission to another's desires.

Keywords: master-slave dialectics; colonialism; data work; form-giving



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Session 6

Architectures of Control and Captivity

Banks, Cecily

This paper explores concepts of freedom of movement and architectures of control within systems of enslavement, exploitation, and power, from the Transatlantic Slave Trade era to today. It will draw from authors who lived or explored these ideas.

In remarks to white Union officers in 1864, President Lincoln promised his vision of fair economic mobility using the deeply racialized concept of the “open field”: “...it is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an **open field** and a fair chance for your industry....” For enslaved persons, this “open field” was the very architecture of criminalized visibility, forced labor, and violent punishment. Where the open field in West African tradition embodied a space to gather, cooperate, and prosper, Lincoln conjured a space to surveil, oppress, abuse, and dehumanize. Had Lincoln intended this promise for all human beings, he would assume that: movement is voluntary; movement can be free; movement is safe; movement is true autonomy; and movement is not selectively granted and denied within systems of power.

Power uses physical, legal, economic, spiritual, and technological controls to restrain free and fair movement. During the Transatlantic Slave Trade, global powers depended on a system of captive, moveable human property – no rights to stay, go, leave, be: “no right to stay” in West Africa, when forcibly kidnapped and forced onto ships for the Middle Passage; “no right to leave,” when imprisoned on plantations, shackled, surveilled, captured; “no right to remain free,” as Fugitive Slave Acts allowed slaveowners to re-enslave freed slaves; “no right to be present,” through Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, segregation, and sundown laws. Today, the “open field” paradox is a border, mega-warehouse, public square, gig job, guest worker program; freedom is as illusory within today’s architectures of technological captivity.

Keywords: Transatlantic Slave Trade, Freedom of Movement; Freedom of Mobility; Architecture of Control; Enslaved and captive; Exploited; Fugitive Slave Acts; Middle Passage; Power and Privilege; West African tradition

Modern Slavery and Financial Institutions

Wilson, Catherine

Financial institutions are invariably related to the companies subject to the recent modern slavery legislation requiring reporting on forced labor activity across the world. Those statutes, however, do not specifically engage financial institutions. What should be the response of financial institutions that provide capital to big businesses subject to these modern slavery laws? This paper highlights some scholarship addressing the historical connections between financial institutions and slavery. Recently, a few U.S. major banks have issued statements by major banks acknowledging their connection to slavery in America and others, committed millions of dollars to initiatives to invest in underserved communities, only to tiptoe away from the commitments. Internationally, human rights commitments seem to be moving in the opposite direction. And yet, financial institutions remain outside the efforts to increase corporate practices to eliminate forced labor and other forms of modern slavery. Focusing narrowly on supply chain practices, the paper will explore whether financial institutions should be required to exercise good faith efforts to encourage corporate activities to reduce modern slavery.



Insuring Slavery, Ensuring Inequality: The Legacy of Enslavement in the Insurance Industry and Its Lasting Impact on Access, Coverage, and Business Protection in the U.S., U.K., and Caribbean

Johnson, Deborah L.

Insurance has a well-documented and troubling history as a tool to perpetuate discrimination. To start, insurance was essential to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The industry was instrumental in financing slavery, with companies such as Lloyd's of London underwriting slave ships, plantations, and enslaved individuals. In the United States, insurers including New York Life and Aetna issued life insurance policies that compensated slaveowners for the deaths of the people they enslaved. After abolition, the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act in the U.K. compensated former slaveowners for their lost "property," while neither formerly enslaved people nor their descendants in the U.S. or the Caribbean received restitution.

While modern legal frameworks prohibit direct discrimination, systemic bias remains embedded in underwriting decisions, pricing models, claims handling, and industry regulations. In the U.S., Black communities face unequal access to home, auto, and life insurance, with insurers justifying higher premiums, policy denials, and limited payouts based on risk factors that disproportionately affect Black neighborhoods. Black-owned businesses also struggle to obtain affordable commercial insurance, limiting their ability to secure leases, loans, and government contracts. In the U.K., Black and Caribbean entrepreneurs experience higher business insurance costs despite the Equality Act 2010 prohibiting financial discrimination. In the Caribbean, foreign-controlled insurers dominate, restricting access to coverage for small businesses and imposing high premiums, particularly for disaster-related protection.

This paper examines how the legacy of slavery continues to shape modern insurance practices, reinforcing barriers to the protections insurance provides. It argues that the insurance industry, long complicit in racial injustice, must be held accountable for ongoing disparities. Addressing these inequities requires stronger legal oversight and anti-discrimination enforcement, policy reforms, and industry reforms—including greater fairness in underwriting, improved claims practices, and increased access to commercial insurance—so that past injustices no longer dictate who is protected and who is excluded.

Keywords: access, bias, discrimination, exclusion, inequality, insurance, protection, reform, slavery, underwriting

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Session 7

Abolitionist Angst Over the Re-election of Abraham Lincoln in 1864

Bulla, David W.

In the summer and fall of 1864, President Abraham Lincoln of the United States faced re-election during America's Civil War. A group of abolitionists in the North became divided over whether Lincoln should be re-elected or not. On Lincoln's side was William Lloyd Garrison, editor of *The Liberator*, and Frederick Douglass, editor of *Douglass's Monthly*; on the other side was Boston abolitionist and orator Wendell Phillips, a frequent contributor to *The Liberator* who had come to believe Lincoln was not doing enough to make the war about the liberation of the enslaved. Other pro-abolition newspapers also were critical of Lincoln, including *The Anglo-American* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. It would be a bitter debate over what should happen in the November general election—and it was a sideshow to the verbal war in the Republican and Democratic press over who should serve the next four years, Lincoln or Democratic nominee George B. McClellan, Lincoln's former head of the Army of the Potomac. Phillips was incensed at Lincoln's gradualism and overall passivity in reining in the rebellious Southern slave masters, while Garrison and Douglass had come to see that Lincoln had grown as president and turned the war for reunion on its head by making it about freedom as much as union. Phillips, who always distrusted Lincoln's infatuation with Henry Clay, the Whig leader from Kentucky in the U.S. House of Representatives and a holder of slaves (added to that impression is that fact that Lincoln was married to Mary Todd, whose family owned slaves and whose brothers would fight for the Confederacy), wanted John C. Frémont to be the Republican candidate again, as he had been in 1856. Among the issues in play were (1) the status of the war; (2) equal pay for Black soldiers and sailors; (3) slavery in the four slave states still in the Union; and (4) the nature of Reconstruction. The abolitionists' war of words over Lincoln ultimately gave way to events on the ground—namely, Major General William T. Sherman's victory in Atlanta in early September that swung the election in Lincoln's favor, so much so that he won in a landslide, partially aided by McClellan giving into the Peace faction in his party. Nonetheless, the division in the abolitionist movement was significant, especially in terms of what it would mean for Reconstruction after the war ended, and after Lincoln's assassination.

Keywords: Abolitionist; emancipation; freedom; journalism; Wendell Phillips; Frederick Douglass; William Lloyd Garrison; Abraham Lincoln; Great Emancipator; *The Liberator*

“The Irish Turned Out Pretty Strong Today”: African Americans and the Irish in Natchez, Mississippi

Ribianszky, Nik

For over 100 years, scholars have investigated the transatlantic slave trade that brought over 12.5 million enslaved Africans to the Americas. This scholarship has illuminated the lives of African-descended people under the various European empires spanning North America, the Caribbean, and down to South America. The more recent field of research into Ireland’s involvement with transatlantic slavery has grown over the last two decades and has uncovered a nuanced history of Irish-descended individuals who fell along the spectrum in a variety of roles from enslavers, overseers, patrollers, and merchants to anti-slavery advocates.

My work centers on Irish-born immigrants, over 100 of whom were enslavers, and those they enslaved, in Natchez, Mississippi from 1763 to 1865. Natchez had a significant Irish immigrant population from the earliest days in the 18th century that especially expanded in the 1850s and 1860s following the Potato Famine. A smaller population than those who immigrated to the North, the Irish in the South felt pressured to assimilate themselves as new citizens and Southerners in a region dependent upon slave labor. By the nineteenth century, it had the second-largest slave market in the U.S. Although most Irish were not enslavers, they largely supported the “peculiar institution.” And when they did own slaves, like most white Southerners, they enslaved a small number of Black people. Mary O’Ruark, who owned two women, fit this pattern. However, some became quite prominent. Cotton broker Frederick Stanton built a palatial home in Natchez that he named “Belfast” in honor of his birthplace and became the sixth largest enslaver in Mississippi, enslaving over 600 people on several plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana. This paper discusses the dynamics of the relationship between African Americans and the Irish in Natchez.

Generational Impact of Enslavement: The Divergent Legacies of George and Martha Washington

Burr, Sherri

My research on “Generational Impact of Enslavement: The Divergent Legacies of George and Martha Washington” examines what happened to the enslaved population on the Mount Vernon Plantation following the deaths of George and Martha Washington. Both were born into slaveholding families, however George (the first President of the United States) arranged to free his entire enslaved population in his 1799 will while most of those connected to his wife Martha remained enslaved until the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War, another three generations.

Over the course of George’s ownership of Mount Vernon, 577 people toiled on the grounds of the most famous plantation in the United States. This plantation appears to be the only place to conduct a study about how the lives of an enslaved population diverged dramatically after the death of their owners. In most other instances, when an enslaver died, his/her property was divided among heirs, with the possible exception of a favored person.

Because of intermarriages between George and Martha’s bondspeople, many families were separated as spouses were set free while their family members remained enslaved. In one example, Ben, a George enslaved person, was freed along with all his children and grandchildren from his first wife, Joan, who had also been a George enslaved person. Ben’s second wife, Peg, and their three children, who were Martha dower slaves remained enslaved. In another example, Isaac, a GW slave, was freed while his wife Kitty and nine children were divided among Martha Washington’s four grandchildren. This splintered the family in five directions.

This tragedy is unique and the stories of the enslaved who lived it deserve to be told.

Keywords: Slavery, Mount Vernon Plantation, George and Martha Washington, Family Separation

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Session 8

The Waters of the Black Atlantic: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Symbolism of the Sea in the Arts of the African Diaspora

Smith-Holladay, Zoe

For generations, artists of the African Diaspora have evoked imagery of the transatlantic slave trade as symbols of Black resistance. As a descendant of enslaved Africans from South Carolina, my visual imagination is preoccupied by these coded artistic representations among the creeping tresses of Spanish moss and Antebellum plantations. In my current third-year dissertation, “The Waters of the Black Atlantic: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Symbolism of the Sea in the Arts of the African Diaspora,” I explore how the Atlantic Ocean is not only artistically depicted as the site of the immeasurable tragedy of the Middle Passage, but as an enduring symbol of resistance.

The Atlantic Ocean is a fundamental symbol of what I term ‘the Afro-Diasporic Code.’ The Afro-Diasporic Code is a byproduct of racialized chattel slavery enforced on plantations across the Caribbean, North America, and South America from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Various forms of state-sanctioned regimes of violence repressed the identity of enslaved Africans to exploit their labor and prevent rebellion. The enslaved resorted to furtive modes of communication.

In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy identifies the African Diaspora as a distinct transcontinental community descended from African enslaved people. Afro-diasporic cultural expressions can be analyzed through de Saussure’s theory of semiology, recognizing signs as socially-constructed conveyors of meaning. De Saussure’s rejection of symbols as neutral and static informs contemporary discourse on how everyday language unknowingly reflects and perpetuates established social hierarchies.

This article proposes that, in addition to symbols establishing hierarchies, the African Diaspora and other marginalized communities can also derive power from the same process of symbolic communication. I demonstrate that the Atlantic Ocean, a continuously reclaimed symbol of resistance in contemporary diasporic art, is an indicator of the Afro-Diasporic Code as a result of the historical legacy of the transatlantic slave trade.

Keywords: Afro-Atlantic, African Diaspora, The Middle Passage, Enslavement, Resistance, Transatlantic Slave Trade, Art

In the Courtyard of your conscience: Enslavement, Heritage Performance and Ancestral Disconnect

Hammond, Nii

This paper looks at the performance of identity and its linkage to heritage. It focuses on how people of African descent identify themselves with and without their ancestors, and the disconnect. I explore the role of the ancestors in the invention of culture and knowledge. If culture is the summed total of a people's way of life within their given space, and culture itself is subject to changes in time and place, what are the commonalities holding African identity together? Do these have a name and what social uniformities and frames bind Africans together?

In many African societies, performance is a primary site for the production of knowledge, where philosophy is enacted, and where multiple and often simultaneous discourses are employed (Drewal,1990).

Not only that, but performance is a means by which people reflect on their current conditions, define and/or re-invent themselves and their social world, and either re-enforce, resist, or subvert prevailing social orders. Indeed, both subversion and legitimation can emerge in the same utterance or act. (Drewal 1991).

Going with Drewal's citations above, I interrogate if knowledge is being created and philosophy is being enacted by people of African descent. Do Africans in the diaspora enact current and ancient African philosophies and perform their identities in their numerous quotidian entanglements? The precolonial African did nothing without referencing what or how it used to be done by the forefathers. Ancestorhood was indeed a very high-level attainment. African forebears thus aspired to live their lives and ascend to the ancestral shade upon their physical death, which was not really the end but the passing on. In this respect the living and the ancestors interacted daily, one from the spirit realm the other in the world of the living.

Keywords: Disconnect, ancestorhood, performance

Oppression and Resistance: Culinary Practices and Afro-Diasporic Identities

Bakuri, Amisah

In anthropology and religious studies, food is increasingly understood not merely as sustenance or cultural expression, but as a site of embodied meaning, contested memory, and social reproduction. As an integral aspect of cultural heritage, food mediates the lived experiences of displacement, spiritual belonging, and identity-making. This study explores how the communal preparation and sharing of 'traditional' foods embody ancestral heritage and resistance, particularly in the context of forced migration, slavery, and European colonialism. While not the initial focus, food emerged as a crucial medium through which research participants challenged historical erasures, asserted their agency, and maintained diasporic ties. Drawing on a year-long ethnographic study, I explore how people from the Afro-Surinamese and Ghanaian Pentecostal communities in the Netherlands draw on religious and cultural practices, particularly around food, to forge transnational identities in the enduring shadow of slavery.

Situating Afro-Surinamese and Ghanaian culinary practices within a broader historical and socio-cultural context, this paper examines the dual role of food as both an instrument of subjugation and a means of defiance. Food and its associated practices evoke histories of forced displacement, survival, and adaptation, simultaneously resisting Eurocentric narratives that seek to homogenise or exoticise non-Western food cultures. The persistence of 'traditional' cooking methods, the adaptation of African culinary principles within the Dutch context, and the commercialisation of diasporic cuisines reflect ongoing processes of cultural appropriation, agency, and resistance. Also, I show how food serves as a catalyst for intercommunal dialogue and healing. The legacies of slavery have historically contributed to tensions between African and Afro-Caribbean populations, yet shared culinary traditions provide opportunities to acknowledge common histories and foster solidarities.

Keywords: Slavery, Afro-Diaspora, Resistance, Culinary, Ghanaian-Surinamese Relations, Colonial Legacies

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Session 9

Ending the Modern U.S. Death Penalty, Confronting a Continuing Legacy of Slavery

Ndulue, Ngozi

Capital punishment has been practiced in the United States from its earliest beginnings, and from the advent of slavery in the American colonial period it became an important tool in the maintenance of a racial hierarchy. Colonial statutes in slaveholding colonies provided different punishments for crime based on the race of the defendant and the victim, and the spectacle of brutal executions was used to terrorize the enslaved populations and to place Black people in an inferior social status.

The post-Civil War period led to formal equality after the advent of the Fourteenth Amendment. This meant the end of explicit provisions for different punishment based on race, but it did not change the symbolic weight of the death penalty. In the early twentieth century, the death penalty operated in close parallel with officially unsanctioned forms of racial violence, mob violence and racial terror lynching. Even as lynchings abated, executions rose and the racialized application of the death penalty continued.

In the past 50 years of the so-called “modern era” of the U.S. death penalty, this racial dynamic has remained consistent. Social science has provided insight into the ways that racial bias produces death sentences, and there is ample evidence that the persistence of the penalty in the face of widespread international opposition is driven in part by the same racial hierarchies and dehumanization that were central to the institution of slavery.

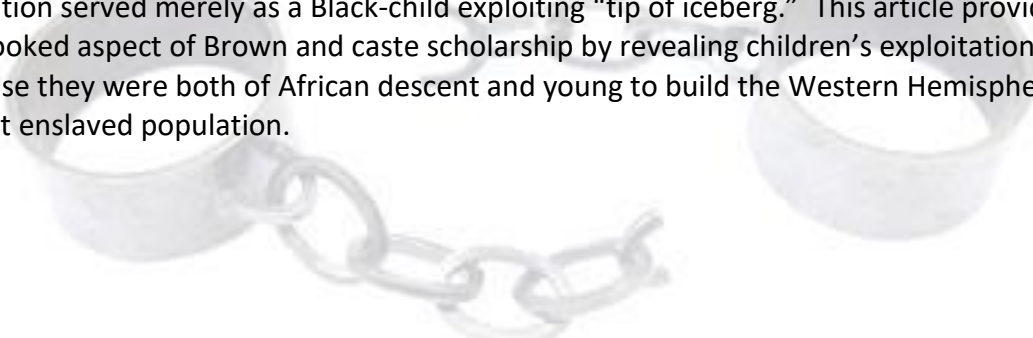
The authors propose that any intervention calculated to abolish the U.S. death penalty must be grounded in an understanding of the punishment as a tool of violence rooted in the continuing legacy of slavery. The authors also discuss the ways the modern death penalty abolition movement is central to addressing this persistent racial hierarchy.

Keywords: death penalty, colonialism, bias, perception, public safety, retribution, abolition

Black Children and Caste

Smith, Catherine

This article argues that in a constitutional first, *Brown v. Board of Education* prohibited the exploitation of the subjective qualities and characteristics of Black young people – the ways in which children differ from adults – to maintain a racial caste system. In *Brown*, Black children attending segregated school districts challenged the “separate-but-equal” doctrine. The plaintiffs’ lawyers argued that even if Black and White schools had the same resources, no state-run segregated system could be deemed “equal.” The Supreme Court agreed, holding that “in the field of public education separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” Much has been written about *Brown*’s declaration that “the Constitution forbids a system of caste.” The landmark decision did far more, however. By concluding that segregated education injured Black young people’s “hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” and severely restricted their ability to succeed in life, *Brown* identified and struck down a regime that exploited an entire group of people at the intersection of race and minority to “permanently lock” them – and their descendants – into a subordinate class. For generations before *Brown*, the United States’ suppression of Black children’s past, present, and futures had been one of the nation’s “most efficient and effective means of creating and maintaining [its] racial caste system.” In other words, Jim Crow’s segregated education served merely as a Black-child exploiting “tip of iceberg.” This article provides an overlooked aspect of *Brown* and caste scholarship by revealing children’s exploitation because they were both of African descent and young to build the Western Hemisphere’s largest enslaved population.



Slavery and Policing

Jefferson-Bullock, Jalila

It is no secret that the United States stands in a period of democratic backsliding and extreme racial retrenchment. For those committed to justice and equity, conditions are ripe for revolution. While transformational change must occur at every level of each American societal institution, one particular area cannot be ignored-- police reform. True revolution, however, requires a stern reckoning with the truth.

The American policing model is to target discriminatorily, surveille persistently, prosecute fervently, and punish vigorously. This includes using deadly force against individuals through a variety of means, but most frequently by shooting. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of the oppressive effects of this heavy-handed approach to criminal justice is borne by Black people. Police officers kill Blacks at rates more than twice those of whites. Such racially disparate outcomes should be no surprise given the roots of policing in the United States. It is well-documented that modern policing's ancestry lies in slave patrols.

During slavery, the use of race as a proxy for criminality was a necessary tool of social control and manipulation. Modern-day racial profiling may be viewed as a badge and incident of slavery, such that the stigma of dangerousness and criminality, incident to slavery's legacy, automatically attaches to Blackness. The stain is permanent, burdensome, and impossible to overcome. In many ways, racial profiling is a modern manifestation of the historical presumption, still lingering from slavery, that Black people are congenital criminals, rightfully subject to constant suspicion because of their skin color. This stigma is the living legacy of slavery and its progeny, systemic racism. In order to achieve true change, this corrupt system must be abolished and wholly reimagined. This proposal seeks methods to do so, and these authors hope to engage with scholars from around the globe to seek abolitionist solutions.

Keywords: slavery, policing, race, abolition, criminal justice reform, resistance

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Session 10

'We can see a savage': AI's colonial epistemology and gaze in captioning archival photos of human zoos

Alenichev, Arsenii

This article engages with the question of colonial knowledge reproduced by generative AI. By captioning archival photos of 'human zoos', we show how AI algorithms systematically proceeded with dehumanization, cultural erasure, othering, infantilization and essentialization of the colonized people brought for public display. We draw on striking parallels between AI-generated captions and 'real' descriptions of the living exhibitions created by Western colonizers. We theorize this phenomenon as AI's colonial gaze, prompting us to think about the reverberating effects of slavery and colonialism on contemporary technology, and the consequent dangers that may come with using AI in archival and historiographical analyses.



Transgenerational Trauma and Its Impact on Lawyer Wellness and Civility

Brewer, Tiffany Williams and Brewer, Eric

The legal profession is significantly shaped by historical and racialized inequities, with Black lawyers being particularly affected by the transgenerational grief and trauma resulting from the legacy of slavery. These deep-rooted experiences continue to influence the mental health, professional interactions, and sense of belonging of Black lawyers in the legal field. This paper examines the manifestation of historical racial trauma in lawyer wellness and professional civility, exploring how these burdens persist. The paper explores the historical underpinnings of transgenerational grief and trauma, shedding light on their lasting effects on Black lawyers' mental health and professional conduct. Additionally, the paper highlights the challenges faced by Black lawyers in a profession often marked by systemic inequities, by examining how the legal profession itself has historically served as both a tool of racial oppression and, paradoxically, a means of redress and advocacy. It discusses the professional challenges of navigating predominantly white spaces, where microaggressions, implicit bias, and systemic barriers can exacerbate the psychological weight of historical trauma. The paper also considers how transgenerational grief influences professional civility, particularly in an era where lawyer decorum is increasingly scrutinized. The unspoken expectation for Black lawyers to maintain hyper-professionalism, even in the face of racial discrimination and systemic exclusion, can lead to internalized stress and frustration. At the same time, the collective trauma of slavery and racial injustice can manifest in ways that challenge traditional notions of civility, as Black lawyers seek to balance the need for advocacy and truth-telling with the pressures of maintaining decorum in professional settings. Finally, the paper suggests both systemic and individual-level strategies for mitigating the impact of trauma and promoting a healthier, more inclusive legal environment. By acknowledging and addressing the historical legacies of racial trauma, the legal profession can foster a more equitable and supportive space for Black lawyers.

Keywords: transgenerational trauma, lawyer wellness, transgenerational grief, lawyer civility

How caste discrimination in South Asia and enslavement of black people in the US became united under federal anti-discrimination law

Brown, Kevin

Abolitionists began to analogize the treatment of Black people to the South Asian caste system as early as the 1830s. They used it to critique not only enslavement, but also the discriminatory treatment that free Black people encountered in the North. The caste-race analogy remained central to discussions about racial discrimination against Black people throughout the nineteenth century, including in debates surrounding the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, Congress' first race-based anti-discrimination measure, and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment that was adopted by the same Congress two months later.

The group most oppressed by the caste system on the South Asian subcontinent are Dalits, formerly known as "outcastes" or "untouchables." Enslavement was practiced on the Indian subcontinent during the pre-Buddhist times, i.e., before 500 BCE, through varna hierarchy. It was also instituted from the sixteenth century onwards in the southwest state in India of Kerala where it was imposed upon the Dalit Parayars and Malayas jatis. The comparison of caste discrimination to the condition of Black people in the United States was first popularized in South Asia by Jotirao Phule, who was the first modern critic of the caste system. He laid out his criticisms in his 1873 book entitled *Gulamgiri* (Slavery). In doing so, he drew heavily on the American experience with slavery, even dedicating his book to the good people of the US for abolishing the system. Because of Phule, the modern struggle against caste oppression and the condition of Black people dates back to the beginning of the former.

Because of massive immigration of South Asians to the US in the past 35 years, caste discrimination against Dalits is now occurring in the US. Since the caste-race analogy was a fundamental feature of Congressional discussions during the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the connection between caste discrimination and discrimination of Black people in the US have now been united in discussions of current US anti-discrimination law. This presentation will discuss how the uniting of caste discrimination in India has occurred through the understanding of US federal anti-discrimination law.

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Session 11

Lessons from the International Criminal Court on Reparations for Chattel Slavery

Keenan, Patrick

Reparations for those affected by chattel slavery are long overdue. The notion of reparations has many dimensions—moral, political, conceptual, among many others—but a reparations process will be a legal process. This intervention draws on the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Court for insights into reparations. The ICC is a particularly useful place to seek guidance because ICC cases address vast harms which affect thousands of people over a wide geographic area. And it has a well-developed jurisprudence on reparations. Any legal reparations process must include several considerations: identifying those entitled to reparations, specifying the relevant harms, determining causation issues and the standard of proof, and specifying the types and modalities of reparations.

Several parts of the ICC jurisprudence stand out. First, because it is a legal process, it requires precise specification of who is entitled to reparations. But simultaneously, the ICC process recognizes that many more people and communities are affected by catastrophic harms than just those who were most directly affected by the wrongful conduct. So ICC jurisprudence has developed a kind of taxonomy of affected persons, from direct victims to affected communities to those who are affected because of transgenerational harm. Combining the precision required of a legal process with a realistically expansive conception of who is entitled to reparations is a hallmark of the system. In addition, ICC jurisprudence has identified many possible types of reparations. These can include support for direct victims, investments in communities affected by catastrophic harms, and other forms.

The caselaw of the ICC has evolved on reparations issues, and this intervention does argue that the ICC's approach is either perfect or somehow binding on others. But ICC jurisprudence has worked through many of the exact legal issues that will arise in any reparation program for chattel slavery.

The American Reparations Trust

Chatman, Carliss

The recent war on DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), efforts to stifle an accurate retelling of history, and the reversal of many initiatives aimed at advancing equality bring to light a gap in prior justice movements that can only be resolved by one thing—reparations. America is capitalist, and there is no equality in capitalism without equal access to capital. Black people in America who are the descendants of the enslaved have faced not only a loss of liberty but also a loss of capital that did not end with emancipation. Instead, in each generation attempts to level the playing field and recover financially have been met with a new form of extraction—from sharecropping, to redlining, to income inequality, to a lack of investment. Prior efforts to obtain reparations have failed, in part, because of a lack of economic interest convergence combined with stereotypes that view Black people as incapable of managing themselves, and concerns over a source for the funding. My proposal seeks to resolve these issues. First, The American Reparations Trust will be funded voluntarily from private corporations. Through a tax credit, qualifying corporations will be eligible to contribute up to 5% of annual gross revenue for a period of 10 years to the Trust. Additionally, charitable organizations, like universities with large endowments, will be eligible to make a one-time 5% contribution. Next, once adequately funded, the Trust will give qualifying Black people the option of taking a lump sum tax-exempt payment of \$250,000 or to receive the funds distributed over a decade, with interest. Finally, the Trust will not be exhausted by distributions. Instead, the remaining funds will be managed to invest in Black businesses, Black communities, and to fund education. Although the reparations payment itself is intended to only provide a contract-based remedy for the harms of slavery and Jim Crow, the investment aspect of the Trust is intended as a partial tort-based remedy to address the lingering pain and suffering experienced by the Black community. The American Reparations Trust seeks to acknowledge that both states and private actors played a role in the exploitation of Black people and the current state of racial inequality and provides a means for both actors to remedy those harms.

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