



# Slaving and Colonialism - Joseph C. Miller, University of Virginia

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## Slaving and Colonialism

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1.

Charles Verlinden, in a broader reflection on colonialism that grew out of his monumental study of slavery in Europe before its Atlantic age, once declared that the only rule regarding slavery and colonialism that he could discern was that the two were incompatible.<sup>1</sup> That is, colonial powers either exploited territories they did not claim to rule directly by importing people from them as slaves or by ruling directly over conquered populations whom they left in place. The Atlantic-world historical referents that Verlinden had in mind were obviously the Americas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Asian and African colonies that European nations claimed at the end of the nineteenth century. This assertion, plausible enough when he made it in the still post-abolitionist and only nascently post-colonialist 1950s, has endured sufficiently that papers on enslaved Africans in the Americas, not to mention an introductory essay attempting to link "slavery and colonialism," would seem to have no place in a journal of "colonialism and colonial history," at least not in Verlinden's sense.

2.

This linkage seems hardly more promising against the background of Immanuel Wallerstein's sweepingly influential political economy of "world systems."<sup>2</sup> Wallerstein united slavery and colonialism by dividing the world into regions related to the economically developing northern Atlantic. Beyond this historically advancing European "core" lay a dependently integrated, largely contiguous and relatively passive "periphery" supplying bulk consumption goods to it; beyond that lay semi-peripheral source-regions contributing luxury commodities and raw materials, with labor there kept in place to produce them. This economic semi-periphery contained areas of the sort that Verlinden had described in terms of the political arrangements of the 1950s as

"colonies." Wallerstein left the remaining regions of the globe, those not directly sustaining the "core" in material terms and therefore not places where "core" interests (and evidently also power to implement them) lay in preserving populations as labor to produce consumer luxuries or industrial raw materials.<sup>3</sup> Before the later nineteenth century, Africa remained outside this "modern world system," and therefore tragically became the source of enslaved workers transported across the Atlantic to bring the Americas within the semi-periphery of plantations and mines. Enslavement accomplished the initial violent phase of integrating semi-peripheries, structurally dependent on accessible labor pools beyond the pale. Nineteenth-century imperialism extended the semi-periphery to the farthest ends of the earth, thus ending slaving on structurally significant scales — that is, significantly contributing to the ongoing consolidation of the European core. Colonialism in Africa proved incompatible with slaving, but colonial occupation of the Americas thrived on slavery.

4.

However, slavery became antithetical to the imperial phase of European expansion. In Verlinden's terms, the abolition of slavery became the *modus operandi*, or at least *justificandi*, of the imperial conquests of the 1880s and 1890s that led to modern colonial rule, nominally to bring the "people [theretofore] without history"<sup>4</sup> into the global progressive sweep toward millennial modernity. As Wallerstein might have it, the vacuum-like suction of limitless growth in modern industrial productive capacity and consumer demand in the North Atlantic swept all the world's other peoples into its vortex. In still other terms, modern technology gave Europeans the communications and transport facilities, biomedical techniques of resisting tropical pathogens, sheer military power, and financial resources to impose themselves directly in every part of the globe, thus rendering enslavement unnecessary to control labor anywhere. Liberal economists formulating progressive theories of the accelerating economic growth condemned slavery to the obscurity of a fast-fading past as, they supposed, "civilization" and modernization enlightened and developed the world, in the image of the West, through colonial rule. Slavery depended on forced labor (and corresponding worker reluctance if not resistance) rather than on individual ambition and on personal responsibility rewarded and was thus doomed to extinction as modern colonialism spread the political and economic benefits of civic "freedom" around the globe.

5.

None of this consensus eighteenth-century "liberal" reasoning about the incompatibility of slavery and colonialism was inconsistent with their less optimistic nineteenth-century materialist counterparts. Karl Marx (1818-1883), translating the incompatibility of slavery and industrialized modernity in the abolitionist age in which he lived, phrased the contrast as succeeding structural "modes of production." In Europe, Marx's primary example of his general theory, a mode of landed aristocracy that he designated as "feudal" had intervened between the era of slavery in ancient times<sup>5</sup> and modern "capitalism," but he did not systematically contemplate colonial slavery in the Americas as a mode of production. Engels (1820-1895) extended Marx's theory to the Asian and African colonial conquests of the later imperialist era by defining the European military power then being asserted overseas as replacing earlier control over slaves by masters who had, by the end of the nineteenth century, everywhere (in the Americas, at least) emancipated their former bondsmen and -women into citizenship and "free" dependence on wages.

6.

Alternatively, some had turned their new colonial dependencies into sources of "paid" — or at least nominally "contracted" — workers transported from their under-producing homelands to European plantations and other regions rendered productive through colonization. The principal example of this pattern brought impoverished workers from India to the Caribbean colonies, where former slaves emancipated there in the middle of the nineteenth century had abandoned their masters, or to colonial possessions in the Indian Ocean area as far west as southern Africa. In the broad terms of slavery and colonial rule, the massive collective power of the modern capitalist economy and the modern military nation-state replaced the personal domination of individual masters over their slaves. Colonial conquest in Marx's terms was the initial violent wave of capitalist plundering as it swept outward from early, local enclosures in the English countryside, through the Americas, and on around the globe.

7.

Asia Marx conceptualized in terms of military rule over resident peasants, parallel to the key elements of his "feudal" mode in Europe, although he characterized these as a distinct "mode of production." Africa, essentially "tribal" and primitive so far as he was aware, interested him much less, other than as a lingering example of an earlier collectivism ("primitive communism"), a kind of materialist adaptation of the contemporaneous romanticization of "primitive

savagery."<sup>6</sup> If these unitary and comprehensive "modes" of production 'enslavement and removal of people as opposed to conquest of territory to hold resident populations in place' could co-exist in practice, they were at least theoretically distinct.

9.

Colonial rule thus marked an overwhelming apogee of European capitalism, worldwide, while slaving once again represented an implicitly earlier moment in which Europeans had not yet accumulated the means, technological or financial, to rule intact communities directly. Instead they had acquired the captives of wars in Africa, as well as refugees, outcasts, criminals, and aliens otherwise unwanted there and made available to them, more through negotiated purchases than through direct seizures. The contrast between buying slaves taken by others and taking lands themselves applied also to the Americas, the first and only sites of significant colonial adventures before the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> There, the Spaniards raided the Caribbean islands and Central America to capture natives as slaves. Slaving prevailed until the spectacular defeats of the Aztec and Inca military aristocracies in the highlands. Then it ended through an extraordinary and very early assertion of colonial authority over the populations conquered, the so-called "New Laws" of 1542. These exposed the native populations to Christian conversion and salvation and hence exempted them from enslavement. More or less intact populations beyond the reach of government authority continued to be targets of private slave-trading, drawing on the desperation of native communities suffering the ravages of pathogens far more powerful than human weaponry and dissolving through individuating temptations of commercial contact that eroded the solidarity of the survivors. Thus Verlinden's "golden rule" of colonialism's incompatibility with slavery appeared validated again: colonial governments preserved the populations they controlled, if only to exploit their labor, while slavers exploited regions beyond the control of their governments.

### *Historical Dynamics*

10.

The incompatibility of slavery and colonialism that liberal, marxist, and neo-marxist political economists elaborated are abstract and structural. Time matters little in these formulations of the point, even in Marx's sequenced "stages." Africa, for one glaring instance, appears as a survival of the past, always carefully excluded from whatever terms mark historical

"progress" in all these models. Verlinden's examples of mutually exclusive slavery and colonialism in fact compare sixteenth-century circumstances of nascent commercialization and monarchical power with the mature national capitalism of the twentieth century.

12.

In fact, behind these structural contrasts two primary interwoven historical processes — commercialization and integration of large political communities — explain the apparent incompatibility of the two. Each derived from the strategies of the two main contestants in the major struggles to organize and benefit from development of the early modern Atlantic world.<sup>8</sup> These processes restate — and, I hope, also explain — the familiar thesis of structural incompatibility by integrating dialectical engagements between the two or among the three parties (including the enslaved) involved. Historians normally think of slavery as a primary relationship between slaves and their masters and consider as "colonialism" the masters' struggles with the political and economic rivals whom they challenged by resorting to slaving. They thus predetermine, by conceptualizing the topics as separate, the consensus contrast between the two. But slaving and strategies of colonialism were in fact mutually engaged aspects of creating the "Atlantic" political-economic space, with "absolute" monarchies in Europe competing to control it by military force, while commercial interests sought to use slaves to escape this growing political control. Over the three hundred or so years from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, repeated confrontations between these military and mercantile parties generated incremental adaptations of strategies of slaving and colonialism on both (in fact, all) sides.

13.

Since both colonial conquests and slaving arose from underlying economic realities, the axiomatic premise of scarcity of resources, I start by distinguishing the parties who resorted to these very different means toward their shared, and therefore competitive, goal of gaining from sustained and viable contacts beyond the emergent unitary sphere of Christian western Europe in the fifteenth century.<sup>9</sup> On the secular, military, continental side, the initial collaborative successes of the great knights of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century "crusades" consolidated a shared consciousness of a Europe as "Christian." Would-be heirs to the crusaders competed for dominance within it during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, ultimately at unsustainable cost. The most successful late-medieval military knights

approached the domestic dominance of monarchs only very slowly and incrementally. The "absolutism" that their heirs would claim in relation to competing landed ecclesiastical and military aristocratic interests at home remained more a dream than a reality. They asserted themselves by offering guarantees of direct personal protection to the dependents of their aristocratic rivals, replacing the preceding politics of collective and personal fealty with individually guaranteed as political "liberties" conceded by grace, rather than claimed by right. These were far short of the "freedoms" later claimed as "rights." The Church was either the chief rival (where military opposition was weak) or the chief ally (against strong military rivals), depending on the strength of the aristocrats. The historical issue for subjects was not personal autonomy or recognition but rather which patron defended them, as privilege rather than by right.

15.

The costs of the emergent monarchies' militarizing process of political consolidation consumed the gains, first, from crusading conquests in the Levant and then from growing commerce with eastern-Mediterranean Muslims. To pay for the growing grandeur required of plausible kings these late-medieval lords borrowed from commercial (and eventually banking) interests connected with Muslim commercial prosperity to the east and south, turning initially to western European financial interests, central European and Jewish, and then to Italians who had profited from the Mediterranean trade. Finally, still nominally united behind the Cross of Latin Christianity they intensified their search for specie and possibly other, by directly promoting royally-authorized commercial ventures abroad. These exotic resources they could convert to their own advantage without directly challenging the aristocratic and ecclesiastical "estates" over local lands and the people living on them, laboring there under various unassailable terms of obligation.<sup>10</sup>

16.

Merchants were external to these internal contests between spiritual and military power at this early stage in central Europe and in central and northern Italy isolated in "free" cities. Great merchants in the cities of northern and central Italy seized the surrounding countryside, uncontested by established aristocratic power, in a kind of inaugural local "colonial" conquest. There, beyond the effective range of other military powers, the Medici and other financial dynasties assembled imposing wealth and power that demonstrated the explosive potential of commercial strategies.

Lacking access to resident labor and determined to invest their currency gains in further profitable trading ventures, rather than to disperse liquid currency — their principal advantage — through cash payments of wages to attract employees, they used their commercial contacts in less-commercialized adjacent regions of eastern Europe to buy people as slaves — the "Slavs" who became the eponymous predecessors of all the "slaves" who followed. By absorbing the women they bought into their large urban households as slaves and deploying the men they enslaved in municipal and port services, they discreetly expanded their household retinues and created the infrastructure of the cities where they lived, without directly challenging the aristocratic and ecclesiastical claimants among whom they lived for control of local populations. Slaves served as ways to defend against the early, growing monopolization of authority eventually claimed by the modern "state," to tax, to wield force, and to settle disputes. The enslaved thus disappeared behind the walls of the domestic households of the urban wealthy, living around the shores of the Mediterranean in cities "free" from the pushy military rulers of northern Europe, where serfs became "subjects" and "slavery," as the inverse of monarchical power, disappeared.

18.

Modern slaving thus appeared as an initial consequence of commercial investment in less commercially organized communities. As examples of the latter, Slavic villages essentially specialized in producing people, while the former — in this case the Italians — invested in the production (and consumption) of goods. These complementing differing productivities generate offsetting outflows of people and of goods and credit: shortages of goods in domestic economies relative to the people whom they might enhance or obligate, and scarcities of people as producers and consumers in relation to the larger quantities of goods that commercial economies can produce (and pay for through elaboration of various forms of credit). The goods of commercial origin may be cheap in cash terms because buyers in domestic economies value them for their distinctiveness rather than for their material aspects that may be expensive to achieve, thus to display the dependency of the retinues whom they thus dress to distinguish. The people produced by domestic economies may be despised and thus worthless at home, but in commercial economies, where the product is valued rather than the people, they can work usefully even for owners who disdain them, drawing on near-universal demeaning stereotypes about



"slaves," and abuse them with moral doubts.

20.

Italian merchants exploited exchanges of this nature in the Slavic shores of the Black Sea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and either sold the slaves they acquired in Muslim markets or absorbed them in their own domestic and municipal services. Slaving, the exchange of commercially cheap goods for valuable labor, thus lay at the very origin of what would become the broad expansion of commercial enterprise that marked the following five centuries in the Mediterranean and then throughout the Atlantic. It was a strategy that enabled mercantile interests marginal to the Christian clerics and military lords of Europe, and under-financed in relation to their accelerating needs for specie, to mount the commercial challenge that eventually and significantly, by means of slaving in the Atlantic, overwhelmed the military and ecclesiastical authorities of the preceding era.

21.

At that early stage in the process of inventing modern civic polities in northern Europe, the word "slavery" referred primarily to anticipatory (sixteenth-century) fears of the kind of unimpeded monarchical authority that would emerge by the seventeenth century as normative.<sup>11</sup> In corporative Iberian society, slavery itself was not a public concern, in spite of the heritage of the famous thirteenth-century *Siete Partidas* in Castile.<sup>12</sup> Outsiders brought in then as slaves were known not by their exclusion from a civil society,<sup>13</sup> since modern civic states did not exist, but rather by ethnic designations denoting their personal origin as alien — hence "Slav" as the etymological root of subsequent designations of people subject to exclusive personal ("proprietary") authority in seventeenth-century environments, in which commercial strategies had become viable means of asserting independence of the monarchical absolutism that by then intruded on private fiefdoms, entourages, and retinues. In the fifteenth century the same ethnic perceptions — "blacks," and so on — had also characterized the growing numbers of sub-Saharan Africans arriving in Europe, sometimes accompanied by religious characterizations of them as "moors" or as non-Christian heathen.

22.

In the hands of merchants excluded from the politics of "honor" in Europe's high Middle Ages, purchased captives were politically less sensitive than local laboring populations. The Slavs purchased through



Italian merchants, mostly female domestics, would thus have been conceded to the exclusive control of their owners, usually resident in the cities. Under these permissive circumstances, the later association of these Slavs with the more commercial, proprietary form of slavery that emerged in the Atlantic would seem to account for the extension of an ethnonym to denote what would later become viewed as the absolute and permanent extreme of a continuum of more qualified forms of personal dependency conditioned on origins. Presumably Africans, also acquired commercially and similarly without local political significance, entered this uncontested form of slavery when they began to arrive in significant numbers in the fifteenth century.

24.

Throughout these centuries the constant tension in Europe revolving around slaves — or rather, around access to local and imported pools of labor and services — thus divided emergently centralizing political authorities from merchants. Aspiring kings in Europe gradually asserted control over home populations, represented ideologically as "liberties" or as royally sanctioned "privileges." Merchants expanded their commercial strategies abroad, in areas seemingly safely remote from politics at royal courts, and where they acquired slaves. Monarchs, focused on local internal challenges and on the rival kings around them, could not initially muster military force sufficient to control these remote regions. Merchants worked almost independently through "trading posts," more at the mercy of African and Asian rulers than their own in Europe.

### *The Americas*

25.

The initial political contest between domestic landed aristocracies, whether ecclesiastical or military, and aspiring monarchs allied with foreign merchants (or in contact with distant lands and resources through them) swung decisively in favor of the latter as Portugal, then Spain, and eventually the northern European monarchies entered the Atlantic. There they rode its riches — primarily silver and gold — to the early modern partnership that became, first, "baroque" monarchical dominance under the military protection of royal navies and bureaucracies at the end of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the struggle shifted subtly toward "mercantilism," as these military costs made monarchs more dependent on the commercial allies they had so successfully cultivated than the great merchant houses depended any longer on them. This transition toward commerce and consumerism, as in all other

elements of this process, was an unintended, often ironic, incremental consequence of the dialectical confrontations through which history proceeds.

27.

In the mixture of contending interests that would later become "colonialism" military conquest became a significant element only in Mesoamerica in the 1520s. Cortez and other *conquistadores* in the name of Latin Christianity and an only nascent Spanish monarchy were about to build effectively independent fiefdoms there by asserting full and direct control of the still-numerous natives of the lands they seized. Enslavement elsewhere in the world had served primarily as a means of recruiting private retinues excluded from external, particularly royal or imperial, access. The polities constructed through these strategies were more "composite" (or "compound")<sup>14</sup> than centralized, more competitive than controlled, more multiple than monarchical, more federated than federal. Private enslavement of conquered populations by competing interests, particularly military aristocrats with strong political connections at home, dissipated the potential gains from exploiting remote resources rather than concentrating these American riches in the hands of the united crown of Castile and Aragon. The centrality of New Spain's silver to the enterprise of early bullionist European expansion, in the era before "colonialism" had been defined, made central control there utterly essential to the monarchical project of consolidation in Iberia. It was the same problem of powerful military aristocrats running amuck that Alfonso X of Castile had sought to inhibit when he issued his *Siete Partidas* in the thirteenth century.

28.

It was against the background of this all-too-familiar context of uncontrolled military power over conquered populations that Charles I (V) consolidated what became the Spanish monarchy by excluding the native populations of conquered American domains from enslavement by their conquerors. The so-called "new laws" issued to this end in 1542 marked the definitive moment in establishing the direct metropolitan (monarchical) authority over remote territories seized militarily that became defined later as "colonialism." This moment brought into sharp relief the fundamental incompatibility of private "slavery" and public (or government) "colonialism": the two were the primary strategies of metropolitan authority and the tendency of the free-lancing nominal agents of the metropole to appropriate the powers granted them to personal ends, in an age long before "empires" in the twentieth-century

bureaucratic sense.<sup>15</sup>

30.

Centralized monarchies in Europe had previously consolidated most successfully by allying with merchant competitors of their own nominal representatives abroad, on the principal that the enemies of enemies can be courted as potential friends. In the case of emergent Spain in the early sixteenth century this strategy rested, first, on collaboration with a Catholic Church zealous to protect its domain of sanctity from Iberia's "Moorish" background and from the crassness of the world of commerce swirling about the Mediterranean, and secondly merchants of safely foreign origin. Spain's kings thus shielded Native Americans from enslavement in the cause of their religious salvation and restricted deliveries of slaves to their New World colonies to merchants from Portugal, and later from the Netherlands, France, and England — anywhere but Spain — who held licenses (*asientos*) granting this privilege. They thus converted the mainland Americas to colonies by limiting slavery there to incidental domestic, urban, and skilled functions that continued the politically benign "Slavic" slavery of late medieval Iberia. They asserted direct control over Native American populations with the aid of their famed legal bureaucracy, thus setting the model for all later colonial strategy: remote and arbitrary legal authority, backed by (costly) military capability, achieved by denying significant autonomous control over resident labor forces to private interests.<sup>16</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this strategy was only incipiently reliable. Stronger kings in England and France rationalized it and attempted with some efficacy to implement it in the eighteenth century, thus provoking one notable failure in North America. Their successors all but abandoned direct colonial rule in the early nineteenth century in favor of commercial alternatives, under the banner of "free trade," before modern transportation, communications, medicines, and machine guns made possible a revival on global scales in the 1870s and 1880s.

31.

No other European monarch succeeded in this delicate seizure of the colonial initiative over the slavers in the Americas, both traders and planters. Spain's later kings paid the price for this initial triumph, based as it was on an ecclesiastical alliance that eroded steadily after the sixteenth century and on the dominance of the raw silver of their American domains that lost its relative advantage as the early bullionist phases of Atlantic

economic growth gave way to paper credits and financial conveyances. In effect, Spain had locked its colonial strategy into circumstances that grew marginal as other kings in northern Europe turned for allies not to foreign traders but rather to domestic merchants.

33.

Portugal failed out of monarchical weakness. Portuguese economic success in the Americas developed as the Portuguese crown was taken into the Spanish legal domain between 1580 and 1640 during the so-called "dual monarchy." The primary merchants of Lisbon remained focused on their declining position in the Old World strategy of beating the Italians to the spice trade of the Indian Ocean and to the gold of sub-Saharan Africa. But the "dual monarchy" also gave them access to the silver of Spain's Indies through *asiento* contracts to deliver enslaved Africans there. Slaving itself they had earlier consigned to relatively minor traders working with Italian financiers to develop sugar on the eastern Atlantic islands just off the African coast — especially the Madeiras and São Tomé — where maritime transport of large numbers of workers, as slaves, from the mainland presented relatively few technical challenges. In northeastern Brazil sugar finally took hold when struggling sixteenth-century sugar planters used this Spanish hiatus in direct monarchical attention to bring Dutch financial resources to sugar planting through Netherlands-based Jewish Portuguese whom the Spain's Inquisition had expelled from Portugal. Brazil would thus develop without significant colonial control by the Portuguese monarchy, at least until the Pombal regime in Lisbon in the 1750s.

34.

The Portuguese monarchy, restored to independence in the 1640s, then resurrected the strategy of allying with foreign merchants, in this case the English at home in the peninsula. The Brazilian plantations had fallen to a Dutch West India Company invasion in the 1630s, as the Company took advantage of the political weakness in Lisbon. Brazilian planters organized their own restoration of the sugar colonies, and their sources of slaves in Angola, during the first decade of the restored Portuguese monarchy. This successful reconquest thus consolidated local planter control in the 1650s under the famed *senhores de engenho* (often with militia ranks as *capitães*), effectively armed in the wake of the wars, and established solidly on the basis of the large numbers of Africans they then brought in as slaves during the 1660s and 1670s through strategies largely independent of metropolitan investment. In Portugal, the monarchy recovered only marginally in the last decades of the

seventeenth century through deep and disabling concessions to financial interests in England. The sugar barons of Brazil thrived all but independently of metropolitan control, building retinues of captives, freedmen and -women, and clients. Portuguese colonial ambitions thus fell victim to the autonomy that commercial slavery gave to the gentry of its American "colony," thus independent in all but name, and more influential than Lisbon in Portugal's nominal colonies in Africa, particularly in Angola.<sup>17</sup> The Lisbon monarchs taxed the trade that merchants developed among their African, American, Asian, and European domains but could not access the enslaved majorities of Brazil or Angola, or control their masters.

36.

France only later entered the colonial game in the Americas (as distinct from uncoordinated, earlier attempts to profiteer from Spain's silver by privateering on the high seas, negotiations for small islands in the Caribbean, and its famed chartered and hence private fur trading networks in mainland North America), at the end of the seventeenth century. As in Spain, the ambitious consolidating monarch, Louis XIV (1643-1715, *r.* 1648-1715), created both kingdom and colonies as complementing components of integrating power around his throne. To complete his strategy of gaining at home by consolidating abroad he, like Carlos V one hundred and fifty years earlier in Spain, and perhaps cannily observant of the contemporary weakness of the House of Bragança in Portugal, asserted direct control over the emerging planters on France's Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. These would-be sugar barons were threatening commercial autonomy by surrounding themselves with slaves, whom they acquired largely through Dutch, English, and other non-French merchants.

37.

A century and a half after the New Laws of Carlos V, commercial entrepreneurs were succeeding military knights as the defining interest throughout the Atlantic. Africans had significantly lesser moral standing in the European imagination than did the natives of the Americas, to be sure, but allowing unimpeded authority over slaves to their owners carried political implications that hindered establishing French colonial power in the Americas. France's economic dependence on the enslaved Africans who had replaced the native populations of the Antilles (decimated as much by early Spanish slaving as by disease) meant that slavery in these American possessions had to be channeled rather than abolished. Louis XIV and his energetic minister

Colbert adapted Carlos' dual strategy of control over dangerously autonomous slavers in the Americas by enlisting ecclesiastical allies at home and rendering the merchants who supplied the slaves to the Americas dependent on the crown, but they adapted these twin strategies to the commercial age into which they were determined to lead the kingdom. For most of the seventeenth century earlier Bourbon kings had been codifying a monarchical "French" law that would supersede the numerous local domains that existed throughout France at the time. One may read the eventual declaration that "there are no slaves in France"<sup>18</sup> as an expression of contemporary tensions of creating "absolute" monarchical power rather than seeing it retrospectively (and a-historically) as anticipating civic "freedoms" defined only later. Since France at the time was more a composite than a single comprehensive entity, this proclamation registered instead as a royal assertion of the impossibility of shielding anyone resident in France from direct royal access, thus exempt from taxes, military conscription, and the other demands of absolute monarchy and incipient nationhood. It also implied the beneficent protection that would extend reciprocally to those loyal primarily, if not exclusively, to the king.

39.

It was relatively easy thus to assert the ultimate reach of royal authority at home, where few enslaved Africans emboldened their owners to object, but it was riskier, if not impossible, to attempt so direct a civil strategy in the Antilles at the trans-Atlantic distances, foreign trading presence, and slow sailing times involved. Louis XIV therefore resorted to the famed 'if partly for anachronistic reasons' Code Noir of 1685. As political strategy,<sup>19</sup> Louis' *Code Noir* inserted monarchical authority into masters' otherwise private domains over their slaves in Martinique and Guadeloupe, in the name of protecting the enslaved from the worst abuses of their owners.<sup>20</sup> As a compromise with masters thus contained, the *Code* also offered a certain (and quite unrealistic) amount of government police protection against the growing and unruly cohorts of Africans arriving on the islands. The *Code Noir* also established the Catholic Church as protector of the slaves' souls and thus authorized potential clerical intrusion into the critical sacramental moments in the lives of the enslaved 'births, marriages, deaths' again at the masters' expense. It involved no "freedom" in any modern sense of government protection of innate human rights, neither for the masters nor for the slaves.

In principle, it restricted the effective autonomy of masters (though this was a goal never fully realized) and ignored the individual autonomy of the enslaved. Church authority over the salvation of souls would compete with the commercial rights of property in the bodies of the saved, to the political gain of the monarchy, not to the secular benefit of any of the Africans held in slavery.

41.

Louis XIV's delicate weaving of monarchical colonialism into the supply-side web of unrestrained commercial slaving on the far side of a large ocean was effective as a political strategy, whatever its eventually considerable economic costs. By the 1680s, Dutch and English merchants had built a decided lead in developing Atlantic commerce, and both the Netherlands and England had taken these national traders into metropolitan strategic plans — monarchical in England, and essentially mercantile in the Netherlands.<sup>21</sup> For consolidating royal French power at home foreign merchants were therefore problems rather than solutions, unlike the militarily insignificant Italian and German merchants who had served the colonial and monarchical strategies of kings in Spain and Portugal in the early sixteenth century. Merchants in continental France, however, were suitably needy to serve reliably as allies against aristocratic and also ecclesiastical competitors. The French monarchy therefore subsidized slaving in the name of French "national" interest, almost entirely in minor Breton ports with strong regional doubts about the acceptability of the Parisian power that Louis was asserting.<sup>22</sup> Slaving would build loyal — because heavily dependent — mercantile cadres in an otherwise remote and reluctant part of the realm. The resulting dependence of the slave-owning planters of the Antilles on reliably struggling slaving firms in Nantes and elsewhere would provide a safely independent way of controlling even the great local prosperity that planters in the large colony of Saint Domingue would attain under this regime, as they built the New World's largest population of slaves throughout in the eighteenth century.

42.

The French compromise thus attempted to combine commercial slavery with monarchical colonialism — an unstable mixture at best. Given the incompatibility of the direct political authority over royal subjects implied by colonial rule with the independence that private retainers of enslaved laborers and servants afforded rich and therefore powerful planters, it could not work for long. The French monarchy accordingly propped up its



colonial system with ever-more-costly subsidies, as the subsidized directed the profits of their slaving into their private purses while claiming (and to some extent, at least, creating) desperate financial need within their firms. Planters executed parallel scams, familiar to any competent modern accountant, to live luxuriously in the islands, surrounded by enslaved retainers and imported material splendor, while carrying deficits in their currency accounts with the suppliers of their slaves, thus allowing the slavers to return again to the royal coffers for further subsidization. The wonders of capitalist debt thus reconciled local wealth in human property with the illusion of metropolitan control in France's American islands — thus, private slavery under colonial government sponsorship. This indebtedness became part of the circumstances that moved planters in Saint Domingue to attempt to seize political control for themselves when the military power of colonial rule evaporated in the wake of the Revolution in Paris in 1789. They then attempted to mobilize the human property whom they thought they controlled in self defense but found that the Africans whom they had enslaved had other ideas of their own.

44.

The slaves of the French initiated the "Haitian Revolution" of 1791 in part because of the power of the ideas of political independence that another group of indebted owners of slaves, similarly chafing at the colonial ambitions of a distant monarch had demonstrated fifteen years earlier in North America. English investors had carried Tudor and Stuart royal banners abroad in the enterprising spirit of private "plantations" rather than through military conquests by representatives of the crown. In the triumphal wake of the 1588 defeat of Spain's great *armada* and through the essentially maritime seventeenth-century rivalry with the Dutch English military, strategies focused instead on the high seas. Systematic English slaving in the Atlantic had begun, as had the slaving of the Portuguese, as ancillary to the search for precious metals as English naval strength became dominant. The Royal African Company, chartered in 1672, focused on the gold of western Africa and also accepted responsibility for delivering captives to toil on nascent sugar plantations in Barbados and Jamaica. From the Company's point of view, slaving was as much as a concession as it was owing to inherent confidence in the profitability of the venture. No doubt some, at least, among its directors expected to find ways to sell captive Africans to the French and particularly the Spanish, in return for silver. Port Royal in Jamaica served this underlying strategy

particularly well.

46.

Planters in Barbados and Jamaica framed their proprietary interest in the Africans that the Royal Africa Company sold them in order to use their labor force as collateral against the debts they incurred to the Company, which became the primary financier of the initial investment in sugar-producing capacity in the British West Indies. With the start-up capital that the Company provided they then built larger and more integrated sugar producing estates than the Portuguese in Brazil had been able to consolidate. But they also ended up considerably more in debt to their metropolitan creditor than had their predecessors in Brazil, and much more dependent on metropolitan suppliers of labor. Slaves only partly paid for thus empowered mid-seventeenth-century West Indian slave-owners at the critical moment of monarchical weakness in revolutionary England. The restored monarchy thus rested its strategy on the commercial power that slavery was building in American sugar and directed its colonial military and territorial ambitions toward the great masses of India, the gleaming "jewel in the crown" of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English monarchy. India then became the seedbed and prototype for later attempts at direct colonial rule in Africa and elsewhere. Unlike the incompatibility of private commercial slavery with government colonialism in the Americas, the British Raj turned a blind eye to ubiquitous domestic slavery of women and children throughout the subcontinent, both among their Indian allies and even in the households of their own employees.<sup>23</sup> This household form of slavery had not threatened Spanish colonial control in the Americas in the same way as did large gangs of enslaved men working productively on sugar plantations, and in India it apparently tolerated the illusion of direct colonial control through the East India Company.

47.

In the English Americas, what is now loosely termed "colonialism" fell far short of the pro-consularship of the viceroy in British India. The American colonies were "colonial" in the strict sense of monarchical control primarily in relation to the Crown's exclusion of foreigners from the sphere within which British commerce operated. The British, French, Portuguese, and Spanish monarchs of the eighteenth century thus sought the only advantage that they could hope to attain, under their unmet needs for cash to pay for these extensive and expensive claims, in collecting taxes on the trade they fostered within their respective

mercantilist domains. The resulting national monopolies raised prices for the finished goods, and slaves, sent out to the Americas and restricted prices paid there to producers of raw commodities, largely employing slaves, thus forcing overproduction. The resulting persistent cash indebtedness drove American masters, rich in land and in slaves, to question the viability of these indirect increasing tendencies toward colonial rule as they developed in the second half of the eighteenth century. West Indian planters, lacking sufficient land in the islands to reinvest profits advantageously there, tended to transfer their liquid assets back to England and so developed a stake in the metropolitan economy. But in North America, where land was cheap in cash terms and available for investing assets held in slaves who were reproducing abundantly, planters seized the opportunity of openings to the West by declaring their independence of the British crown in 1776. Growing populations of slaves maintained independently of British suppliers and available for further deployment on the frontier thus emboldened North American planters, also debtors to England, to realize the fears of Spanish kings two and one-half centuries earlier, by using their human property to reject British attempts to consolidate controls of a directly colonial character. Slavers had demonstrated their ability to thwart even incipiently direct colonial rule.<sup>24</sup>

49.

Owners of slaves were sufficiently powerful in the new United States in 1789 that they forced recognition of slavery in a national constitution dedicated to freedom (for at least a few), and they defended their human property successfully throughout the first half of the century, even in the highest institutions of the federal government. Where there was no heritage of strong, direct colonial rule, slavery tended to prevail. The central United States government essentially acquired its dominating role in politics in North America in significant part through the populist campaigns that abolitionists waged in the 1840s and 1850s against slavery and the wartime mobilization that ended it in the 1860s.

50.

The United States thus moved from considering slavery an unfortunate embarrassment to the political ideals of "liberty" that propelled thirteen colonies to reject the "slavery" of British domination to holding it an abomination so alien to American soil that men and boys eagerly died to eradicate it or defend it, as a newly constituted but still pluralistic republic became a singular "nation" straining toward a sense of its own

unity. In fact, of course, the United States became more diverse in the first half of the nineteenth century even than its colonial past, as immigrants from Catholic Ireland and eastern and southern Europe and elsewhere thronged to its shores. But a safe war against its Mexican neighbor to the south in the 1840s and the shared vision of a western frontier of opportunity open to all, as well as popular reform movements began to build a popular sense of nationhood. This populism, both southern and northern, then divided over the presence of the slaves among them, or not, as alien to the coherent and singular "national" identity toward which many strained. The compromises of the Constitution of 1789 betrayed the composite character of the early Republic, in which gentleman farmers relied on the slaves they held to protect themselves from encroachment by a strong federal government that would serve the interests of the very commercial development that had left them badly indebted. The stronger national government that developed from the 1830s through the 1860s, and the popular masses who looked to it for the "civil" protections it seemed to offer newcomers and for the lands it distributed to farmers driven west by commercialization in the east, could not continue to consolidate the "national interest" over the opposition of the prosperous slave-owners of the antebellum "cotton south." Strong, centralized government, particularly in its populist North American form, could not tolerate the autonomy provided by holding residents in slavery.<sup>25</sup>

52.

The subsequent formation of similarly "national" (if only in theory) governments throughout the nineteenth-century Americas translated the incompatibility of strong government — whether colonial or national — with the private autonomies that slaving supported. Rather than appearing then as a conflict between a distant military monarchy in Europe and commercially oriented slave-holding American planters, the struggle south of the Rio Grande became one between weak republican governments and surviving wealthy private interests from the colonial period. The former tended to appeal to the popular masses, both out of the enlightened idealism of their leaders and also out of their sheer need to find sources of strength to oppose the autonomous power of owners of hundreds, if not thousands of slaves. The independent regimes in the former Spanish colonies, heirs to a tradition of monarchical rule from afar, simply abolished slavery, asserting its incompatibility with strong national government of, by, and for all its citizens, including everyone resident within it. There authoritarian rule

tended to remain, often under the coloring of populism, and the diverse Native, African, and Hispanic cultures of these countries were not mobilized to assert dominance on the grounds of politicized "race," as in the United States, where a participatory civic government meant that full acknowledgement of citizenship carried with it, at least theoretically, potentially powerful civil rights. In numerous cases, the descendants of these slaves maintained strongly "African" cultures, but these tended to disappear behind the rhetoric of a relatively Hispanic national political culture.

54.

In Brazil, the nineteenth-century heirs to the colonial *senhores de engenho* expanded slaving to staff the development of coffee estates as well as sugar plantations. They seized control of a monarchical government at Rio de Janeiro by assimilating the Portuguese royal house when Napoleon's armies drove it from Lisbon in 1807. When the British restored the Portuguese throne to the peninsula in 1821, these Brazilian aristocrats claimed independence not as a republic but as an empire headed by a royal heir. Slavery presented little threat to this "composite" state, and so it thrived on through a voluminous continuing trade with Angola, directly across the southern Atlantic, in spite of naval interference by the British West Africa Squadron and sometimes fervent diplomatic pressure from London. Given the Brazilian imperial state's basic commitment to slaving, the effective external presence was British financial capital, which flooded Brazil after its loss of markets in North America. The direct slaving connection to Africa, in which private British (and North American) investors colluded, once again in defiance of the military force and contrary to the policy of the Crown government in London, helped to keep Brazil independent of the neo-colonialism of

nineteenth-century British "free trade."<sup>26</sup> Slaves remained the basis of a fragmented Brazilian independence, more a collaboration among regional landed aristocracies (sometimes headed by military *capitães*), than an integrated "national" government. Emancipation for the enslaved came only in the 1880s, when "free" immigrants from Portugal, Italy, Germany and elsewhere, joined by ex-slaves and their descendants, had built a popular base sufficient for politicians less invested in slavery to assert themselves by calling it to "national" arms. For the last time in the western hemisphere, an aspirant national regime had found slavery incompatible with centralization of its political authority.

*Colonialism Continued*

55.

The arena of confrontation between slavery and colonialism then moved to Africa and Asia, as Europe attempted to extend its unitary conceptualization of political authority as "imperial" control on around the world. In broad terms, the slavers there were the wealthy and otherwise powerful among the conquered. Central authority, represented by the metropolitan governments that backed colonial military regimes, depended on establishing direct access to the laboring forces of the colonies they claimed. However, and particularly in Africa, large proportions — sometimes majorities — of the populations whom the Europeans encountered were living as slaves.<sup>27</sup> The Europeans had justified this radical extension of political control as defending the personal liberty of individuals being seized there and sent as slaves to Muslim regions around the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, as well as the others subjected to enslavement within Africa, and so they could not publicly acknowledge the slaveholders among the Africans for whom they had taken political responsibility.<sup>28</sup> However, at that early stage of consolidating effective colonial control, rebuilding after the disruptions of military conquest, they had no popular legitimacy and so depended on the coercive powers of the slave-holders to mobilize resources of any sort.

56.

This always-uneasy tension between central authority and the relative autonomy that holding slaves gave to those subjected to it settled into an uneasy stand-off in early colonial Africa. Most colonial regimes strained to protect collaborating African slave-holders as "traditional chiefs" or recognized them in other subordinate roles in local administration, turning a blind eye toward the extent to which their abilities to deliver in those capacities depended on the control they exercised by including slaves among their retinues.<sup>29</sup> They proclaimed formal emancipation for anyone who wished to declare her- or himself a slave, and they often responded effectively to the small number of individuals who presented themselves seeking "freedom." They mounted slightly more intensive and effective efforts to suppress violent seizure and open trading in slaves. But the publicity value of these policies at home in the metropole exceeded their worth to most of the people they thus claimed to rescue. With a few notable exceptions,<sup>30</sup> most of those living as slaves preferred the protection of their masters, especially as these patrons enjoyed the favor of colonial regimes hardly less brutal

than the daily mistreatment and humiliation that they endured at home. The colonial cash economy was too weak to offer any advantage to a slave seeking to earn wages to support him- or herself alone. In early colonial Africa one can observe the inverse of the apparent incompatibility of private slavery with the strong and unitary governments: weaker, effectively "compound" or "composite" state regimes tended to develop the limited degrees of collaboration that they reached by strengthening willing participants in them through supporting â€” or in this case merely allowing â€” slaving.

58.

World War I forced direct mobilization of colonial African subjects, slave or not, and metropolitan investment in the colonial economies finally offered those living in slavery realistic opportunities to support themselves independently of their patrons, in cities, or by contract to plantations and mines. However, such *de facto* self-liberation came at the often-high cost of subjugation to the erratic and discriminatorily inadequate provisions of the colonial state for its African subjects. From the perspective of one thinking, as most Africans did, of slavery as a matter of loyalty reciprocated by responsibility, the colonial state and its entrepreneurial and industrial collaborators were less attractive patrons than the security of the private patronage they could count on, however humiliatingly, as slaves. In the long perspective of the politics of slavery and colonialism, the weak colonial state in Africa did not live up to its claims of providing for its subjects, and slavery thus survived by default and with the tacit consent of at least some of those enslaved.<sup>31</sup>

59.

It is the same weakness of the subsequent independent governments in Africa, or their willingness to allow their own impoverished citizens to emigrate in pursuit of supporting themselves adequately elsewhere, that encourages contemporary slaving at the start of the twenty-first century. The dialectic of slavery and colonialism thus represents one historical phase of an enduring tension between recruiting personnel from external sources to compete for position within composite polities anywhere in the world â€” Europe as well as Africa â€” and centralized authorities extending recognition, privileges, liberties, and eventually "rights" in the case of the nationalist regimes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as the "civilization" offered to the subjects of modern colonial rule in Africa and Asia.

60.



Through all the varying political cultures around the Atlantic and throughout its accelerating commercial economic growth from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and beyond, slavery indeed appears incompatible with colonialism, but in ways that varied historically, and intriguingly. Confirming Verlinden's essentially timeless generalization in historical terms requires making relevant distinctions among the various interests contending among themselves behind the ideology of unity that large, centralizing states 'monarchical, nationalist, or imperial' adopt to naturalize themselves at the expense of the alternative, more local or regional, or economic interests that they thus assemble into a single claims political entity. In broadly schematic terms, the significant dialectic of these centuries in Europe and in the possessions around the Atlantic that its monarchs claimed pitted increasingly centralized political institutions 'first monarchies, later "nations" against preceding arrays of local and regional military lords (through the sixteenth century), then against commercial corporations (in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), and eventually against any private interest excluding dependents as slaves from theoretically inclusive, participatory "national" governments. This evolving dialectic suggests a precise distinction between "colonialism" as the enterprise of central governments within domains they control and slavery as a resort to human resources (whether labor, or service, or merely presence as retainers of utterly undivided personal loyalty, or obedience) from outside the range of the increasingly comprehensive claims of states to residents born within its jurisdiction 'at first as subjects, eventually as citizens.

61.

Political and military expansion first enables slaving by establishing marginal, initial contact with remote ("enslaveable") populations and then makes it necessary for marginal participants in the process of political consolidation to use the people enslaved in their own particular interests, against the expansive state. Slaving thus dialectically generates a brake, an automatic governor, on the consolidating military state. In Europe, monarchy generated slaving in Africa and the Americas. Slavery in the Americas in turn supported the revolts that marked the transition to national civic states both there and later in Europe.<sup>32</sup> At home, monarchs based their ambitions toward centralized political authority by promising "liberties" over the heads of competing patrons, thus intruding on the privacy of domains maintained by serfdom or through slaving. These "liberties" then became the cause that later generations

asserted on their own accounts as "rights" under "natural" law higher than the laws of monarchical absolutism.

63.

Seeing slavery and colonialism as a dynamic competition between marginal interests using slaving strategies (expressed first as personal retinues, later in terms of commercial law as "property") and stronger and stronger military states â€” later nations â€” suggests a dialectical politics that does not emerge from analyses predicated on the unitary ideology of the modern state. Most existing sociological statements of incompatibility rest on the unproblematized premise of comprehensive "societies" or civic polities. The first logical step in grasping the underlying dialectic is to view all polities as "compound" or "composite" beyond the unifying ideologies that they must construct to conceal precisely this complexity.<sup>33</sup> Aspirant monarchs in Europe, before they became kings, depended on merchants and their access to distant resources to build military power sufficient to claim direct subjugation of the peasants and others â€” including Native Americans â€” who had would otherwise have owed primary allegiance to rival aristocrats. Merchants then appropriated the access they gained to not only the gold of Africa (ultimately claimed by kings) but also to its populations. With slaving, they created private commercial domains in the New World. The very ambitious European monarchs of the late seventeenth century then faced the challenge â€” one they generally failed to meet â€” of establishing direct colonial control over the American economies they had fostered.

64.

The politics of the American "colonies" of the eighteenth century bore only a nominal relationship to the twentieth-century "colonies" in Africa, since most of the people in the Americas were enslaved, thus excluded from the direct reach of the government. The slave-owning planters of English North America and French Saint Domingue claimed formal political recognition of the autonomy they in fact enjoyed, not least because of the enslaved people they owned. The North Americans, slaving relatively independent of British suppliers of enslaved Africans, succeeded in claiming independence. They succeeded also because of the acquiescence of their enslaved families of African descent, whom they had by then encouraged to reproduce into the third and fourth generations. A few of these enslaved claimed the "freedom" that British officials offered them in the ensuing war to undercut their American owners, evidently knowing full well the

sensitivity of the revolutionaries' prospects to the quiescence of the people they owned.

66.

Not many of the slaves responded, since for them family at home, even under slavery, seemed to offer security more reliable than the mercies of people who had bought their ancestors in Africa and brought them to America in chains. The enslaved populations of Saint Domingue, in contrast, were first-generation, mostly males, and hence unencumbered with personal responsibilities, other than to themselves. Once French military control weakened after 1789, they took matters violently into their own hands. National governments throughout the Spanish Americas abolished slavery in their national constitutions, since their futures depended on eliminating private domains of slavery to declare at least theoretical equality among their politically participating citizenries. Slavery challenged nationalism and its implicit ideal of unitary and comprehensive state power, as sharply distinct from the compound premises of republicanism, with its conceptual space for genteel heads of large households and clientele, no less than it had threatened the similarly unitary claims of absolute monarchs.<sup>34</sup> The apparent paradox of Washington and Jefferson in the United States, gentlemen farmers with hundreds of slaves on their large estates in Virginia, launching a republic thus resolves.

67.

The contradiction between state power and private slavery continued through the true state colonialism of the first half of the twentieth century. In the wake of the colonial conquests of the 1880s and 1890s weak, reluctant, and otherwise preoccupied governments in Europe conceded virtual enslavement of local populations to a spectrum of collaborators in Africa (but less so in Asia), notably private enterprises given virtual autonomy in vast domains. This moment corresponded to the free-booting *conquistadores* of sixteenth-century New Spain in the challenge that these "concessionary companies" posed to metropolitan control, and in their tendency to treat the inhabitants of their domains essentially as slaves subject to seizure and arbitrarily harsh demands for their labor. King Leopold's Congo Independent State was the most notorious example.<sup>35</sup> Metropolitan governments soon ended these abuses in the name of colonial responsibility (but one may also read "control") and "abolished" slavery, of course. They used the prospect of legal emancipation to undermine their African slave-holding partners, most of whom held positions worth the attention of the colonial regimes

only because of their retinues of slave dependents gained during the chaos of the second half of the nineteenth century.

69.

Whatever the limited personal autonomy gained by the few slaves "freed" in colonial courts, the contradiction of colonial authority and slave-based autonomy maintained a viable balance, at least through the First World War. The war effort forced the colonial regimes to gain more direct access to these general African populations, and then the economic challenges of the 1920s and 1930s brought assertions of ever-more direct government authority over the residents of colonies in Africa. Former enslaved dependents sought autonomy — or perhaps better: honorable clientage — as subjects of the colonial state, as employees of European enterprises, as converts in the Christian missions, or as members of Islamic *sufi* brotherhoods to lessen the risk of vulnerable isolation that accompanied individual opportunity, or opportunism. Slavery in Africa accordingly became more a humiliating personal legacy than a contemporary obstacle to individual self-assertion through access to money, education, and other resources distributed by the state.

70.

World War II extended much more widely the paradoxes — hearing the siren song of personal autonomy but too insecure to heed it — of people who were simultaneously colonial subjects in public and slaves within the private domains of their own communities. These uncertainties prepared the ground for the intensely emotional, and deeply paradoxical, collective self-assertion of the "nationalism" of the 1950s, at once mobilizing older, more parochial loyalties to win the opportunity to build a future "national" integrated civic community that might provide comparable security. For many reasons, few African governments realized this promise for long, and the ardent collectivism of the nationalist phase of modern Africa's history faded toward the weak states and popular cynicism of the early twenty-first century. Given the incompatibility of strong, particularly populist, government with slavery, it should not surprise that warlords, ethnic genocides, and "contemporary slavery" have exploded into the power vacuum. They demonstrate the ongoing incompatibility of slavery not only with colonialism but also with every form of integrated, unitary political community beyond the private collectivities characteristically built through slaving. Monarchical, national, and colonial regimes all depend on asserting direct civil authority over resident

populations; interests marginalized by all these forms of political consolidation have frequently resorted to slaving to build private retinues immune from the claims of an encroaching state. In historical terms, slaving therefore flourished in remote regions of the growing Atlantic world because monarchical regimes needed it. "National" governments suppressed it in the name of comprehensive "equal" access to all of their citizens.

*The Papers*

71.

The essays that comprise the principal contents of this special issue approach these very broad historical dynamics through the eyes of those who experienced the isolation of enslavement or the shared subjugation of conquest and exploitation. Their experiences contrast no less than do the abstractions of "slavery" and "colonialism." Masters resisted central government authority primarily because they could acquire Africans as isolated individuals, culturally disabled (as well as physically debilitated) by forced removal and dispersion to entirely alien environments in the New World. Colonial conquests, on the other hand, attempted to control people who lived in viable, if momentarily defeated, communities. In fact, colonial rule in Africa depended on the collaboration of the leaders of these intact communities, slaves and all, particularly in its early phases and often also particularly on former slaves seeking respect from Europeans that they could not obtain at home. The following papers range conveniently, for analytical purposes deriving from this contrast, from slaves in early seventeenth-century Spanish America to mid-twentieth-century colonial subjects in central Africa. They also evoke perspectives of Africans from immediately after their arrival in the New World as slaves to the modern heirs of the American-born generations they left behind them. The meanings of these experiences, especially as evoked in literary modes, bring to life the abstractions that structure this introductory essay "an essential step if we are to understand the human motivations that create the historical dynamics of slavery and modern colonialism.

72.

Kathryn McKnight's sensitive probe of a Spanish judicial inquiry in Cartagena de Indias into the early seventeenth-century *palenque* of Limón reveals a rich array of implications for understanding the human dynamics of the African diaspora and of slavery. She cautiously associates "Queen" Leonor's ritualized

violence in America with similarly intense immolation and even consumption of other victims during the preceding decades in Angola. The success of the *palenque* confirms the dependence of slavery on the isolated vulnerability of its victims, since enslaved Africans who in this case managed to find companions of common backgrounds and to appropriate their shared African heritage collaborated effectively to resist slavery in the Americas. McKnight approaches these dramatic, if not also desperate, practices as the strategies of people trapped in contexts not of their own making, rather than falling back on such inert abstractions as "cultural survivals" to explain their behavior. Rephrasing what McKnight shows in the language of culture, one would say that the murders in Limón were novel adaptations of previous experience to exigencies of the moment. If there was continuity, it occurred at the abstract psychological level of the efficacy of such spectacular, even horrifying, techniques in forging functional communities out of strangers thrown on one another for mutual survival. In Angola refugees from the chaos of severe and extended drought banded together through such rituals; in Cartagena de Indias they created community beyond the isolation of their enslavement.

74.

The complement of this characteristically African emphasis on community solidarity is that for them personal identity and dignity flowed not from the isolated autonomy of modern "freedom" but rather from belonging somewhere, in a group. Belonging matters particularly in the political context of the polities that I have described as "compound" or "composite"; there no comprehensive and inclusive civic state exists to protect individuals, to guarantee the security provided by monarchical general "liberties" or democratic "rights" or the rule of law. Rather, security derives from the favor of a strong patron; unquestioning loyalty is balanced by responsible patronage. In this universe of relational identities, personal duplicity is far more than a disappointment; it is life-threatening. Betrayed trust of this vital sort repeatedly punctuates the legal records of the Limón *palenque* that McKnight cites, as justifications for the conflicts and violence performed. A party to a partnership, however unequal, who undermines its purposes is no longer immune from any form of retaliation, including murder; the moral bond is broken. Complex and ambiguous relationships of mutual dependency are at the core of Orlando Patterson's subtle sociology and psychology of slavery.<sup>36</sup> In Cartagena McKnight shows these relationships acted out, or acted out in response to violations of them, in a

complex American invocation of African methods of responding to perfidy, no doubt given an urgency all the greater because of the deprivations and brutalities of enslavement. McKnight gives us a much more nuanced and productive model for handling conflict in the context of slavery than the usual tautological leap from slavery as "total domination" to slave initiative almost exclusively as "resistance."

76.

Michelle Collins-Sibley's readings of Olaudah Equiano's "interesting narrative" and of the poetry of Phillis Wheatley converge suggestively on the same theme of deceit by someone who should have been worthy of trust. Equiano's African past, first-hand or not, begins with this key trope, and betrayal recurs throughout his narrative of his early life in the Atlantic world, where he was promised patronage again and again, and each time was betrayed. The only secure place, as the narrative develops, is to reinvent himself as a late-eighteenth-century individual, self-creating and self-supporting through writing and selling his own biography. With regard to Wheatley, Collins-Sibley's accent on poetic expression, like Iroquois masks, as an emotional reaction to personal trauma that expresses agony more deeply than words, suggests a further overtone to the brutality of "Queen" Leonor's carnage in the *palenque de Limón*. Slaughter on the systematic scale that she pursued must also have released the traumatic stresses of capture, the Middle Passage, and enslavement in the Americas, all capped by betrayal of the only thread of security that these slaves and fugitives had been able to spin.

77.

Elizabeth West's examination of Alexander Crummell's failure to win the "hearts and minds" of the Africans in Liberia offers an intriguing reversal of racial roles: Crummell, the American black as colonizer in mid-nineteenth-century Liberia. Like the other papers in this collection, West contextualizes her subject carefully, to explain how American (and English) Crummell had become, as his predecessor David Walker had proclaimed in his famous response to Thomas Jefferson and others, who worried acutely about a future United States divided into co-resident races of "irremediably unequal prospects. However, racial lines in the presence of ongoing slavery had not yet consolidated to a degree that would force African-Americans to look to Africa as the "homeland" that it became for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren later in the twentieth century. In the 1850s and 1860s, Crummell was at pains to represent the



European civilization that he ' like Equiano ' had worked so hard to obtain. In the context of the present essay, Crummell represented the direct claims on subjects, the Africans living inland from Monrovia, that characterize colonialism.

79.

The ex-slave as colonialist may not be the anomaly that present-day racial assumptions might make it seem: rather, Crummell represents the intense desire of the enslaved to belong. He came of age in the United States, as an American, during the flowering of nationalism in his native country and went to Liberia as its self-appointed representative, intent on "civilizing the natives" by spreading the gentle gospel of Christianity. The "natives," of course, as colonial subjects had networks and communities of their own that allowed them to ignore Crummell and the other Americo-Liberians ' unless they applied force. Crummell's failure in Liberia thus demonstrates the elemental dependency of colonialism, particularly in its early and weak manifestations, on collaborators, or on violence. Its subjects are anything but culturally disabled, anything but needing to look elsewhere than to themselves to belong.

80.

Olivia Smith Storey's exploration of the widespread, and widely studied, literary image of "flying Africans" weaves together a number of themes derived from the fundamental incompatibility of enslavement and colonial subjugation. Like the other scholars writing here, she is at pains to contextualize the relationship between slave and master, or in her case between heirs to each as they remembered slavery days from the perspective of the 1930s. In her literary mode of analysis the context is the narrator of the story, the African-American, the slave or ex-slave born into slavery rather than captured (like Equiano, Wheatley, and the *malemba* of the *Limã³n palenque*) in Africa. In this respect, the twentieth-century narrators of stories about the "flying Africans" are Americans like Crummell. But, unlike Crummell, they are people excluded from the satisfactions of the American culture into which they were born. Rather than adopting and proselytizing its values, they look nostalgically back to an Africa romantically imagined through the strange and exquisite powers of the true Africans ' who spoke mysterious words and then soared into the skies, presumably back to Africa, leaving the American-born ' whom she terms "Creoles" ' to wonder at what of their powerful heritage they have lost. Unlike Crummell again, they did not have the opportunity to learn the realities of Africa

first-hand. Storey's triangle of African, Creole, and Overseer may also represent ' beyond the several aspects of it that she explores ' the gap between the enslaved and the colonized, the former removed and mobile but the latter rooted and left behind. This parallel implies that the position of the formerly enslaved in the twentieth-century United States is like that of the colonized ' present but not participating, subject to the comprehensive authority of excluding law but belonging in strong networks of family and faith. Enslavement, by contrast, has its advantages from the perspective of the resigned ' possessed of unintelligible words that invoke unseen but evidently ambient energies.

82.

Knight describes a parallel energy or force invoked by "talkin' to tools" as an expression of other-worldly powers asserted by the powerless in the day-to-day world of post-slavery subjugation. Like Story's magical incantations ' or, for that matter, not unlike Crummell's faith in *The Christian Word* and in the empowering qualities of speaking English ' words have powers that exceed the mundane force of the whip applied by masters, overseers, or colonial police. The power of speech has become an axiom in the post-modern world of European and American cultural studies, but these nineteenth-century African-Americans evidently understood the point, a century before Foucault.

83.

With regard to the African antecedents of beliefs like these in the Americas, Knight touches on several widely separated parallel notions in Africa ' Asante, Kongo, and Songhay. This strategy, unlike McKnight's handling of the "jaga" tradition in Angola, seems intended not to identify a specific African locale from which slaves in the Americas might have derived this image but rather to suggest a very broad way of believing ' as distinct from specific beliefs ' around which slaves of many backgrounds in Africa congregated in the Americas, all but spontaneously. That is, apparent specific manifestations of Africans' backgrounds may be less significant than the diffuse commonalities that Africans in the Americas adapted, even unrecognizably to their own practitioners, to their circumstances in the New World. If these adaptations proved effective, each generation of American-born slaves who followed the generation born in Africa expressed them in new ways, applied to and derived from the circumstances of later moments. The implication of this process is that the less superficially similar to specific African practices these

unarticulated "memories" were, the more important they were to Africans' children and heirs who made use of them in the Americas.<sup>37</sup>

85.

Stuart Marks's essay carries us forward in time and east across the Atlantic to British Central Africa in the early years of European rule. His is a story of a very small village in a remote (from the British colonial authorities' perspective) valley. In this narrative Marks very clearly shows the background of intense slaving within the region during the late nineteenth century and the weakness of the colonial authorities there early in the twentieth. He shows us the intricacies of attempting to intrude on intact colonial communities and the ongoing significance of slave background — whether personal origin as in the case he recounts of one Makulushya — or anywhere identifiable in the background of one's parents. We see here the personalism of power and authority; there may be an abstracted political "office" (the Chitala), but the relational identity of the one who holds it matters enormously. This personalized notion of power contrasts sharply with the abstracted notions of authority that developed in Europe and around the Atlantic as fiefdoms grew to small kingdoms, and then to large monarchies with colonial extensions on around the globe. The face-to-face qualities of communities like Makulushya's, or Nkuka's, could only be imagined on these large scales, beyond shared obligations to a mysticized figure of the king as an intimate (often "father") of all his subjects. A similarly relational and personalistic notion of society surrounded Limón, if not also in the narrative of Equiano and in the poetry of Wheatley.

86.

With specific regard to slavery, Makulushya represents a tendency widespread in early colonial Africa (and subsequently) for slaves to use European authorities, almost entirely innocent of the webs of ranked relationships constituting African communities, to claim places in the colonial sphere much more advantageous than their humble positions at home. Colonial subjugation was preferred, evidently by at least some, to the isolation and humiliation of slavery — particularly early, when colonial power was weak. The two separate but intricately intertwined spheres offered room to maneuver to slaves, whose position was defined by lack of options among the multiple and overlapping relationships that created a degree of autonomy for individuals able to construct these networks, even in the strongly communal ethos of Africa. Their relational identity was singular, to whomever had acquired them;

appointment to a position in the "native" level of the colonial administration in effect added a second, very powerful patron. The enslaved knew well how to exploit such opportunities. Elsewhere (if not also in Northern Rhodesia) chiefs under heavy pressure from colonial officials to fulfill labor quotas satisfied them by sending young slaves off to work in distant plantations or on copper, gold, and other mines, under debilitating conditions, only to find that even the limited cash they earned there reduced their dependency. Missionaries "ransomed" slaves and welcomed the slave children of African political authorities to their schools; significant numbers of the first generation of western-educated Africans thus came from slave backgrounds. As they and their children assumed prominent positions in colonial (and eventually independent) governments after World War II they had completely turned the tables on the heirs of their former masters. Weak, early colonial governments thus recruited the weak among their African collaborators; the formerly weak had become strong. This pattern illustrated in yet another way the incompatibility of colonialism and slavery, as colonial rule empowered the enslaved.

88.

The same personalism pervaded the relationship of slave and master in its classic form, including much of Africa, as Patterson develops so elegantly in *Slavery and Social Death*. However, enslavement in the Americas lost this quality of intimacy, as great numbers of African men, and then also women and families in the United States, found themselves settled in remote "quarters" (in the Chesapeake), living under the task system in the Carolina Lowcountry in homesteads and hamlets of their own (the source of Storey's stories of "flying Africans"), or bunked in barracks or eventually living in villages on the great West Indian sugar plantations. The disproportionately large numbers of enslaved Africans relative to their masters made it possible for the people living in these circumstances to relate â€” all but uniquely in the long world history of slavery â€” effectively with one another rather than with their owner. In the United States, these historical intimacies between slave and master persisted only among house servants, in some cities in domestic environments, and on smaller farms with only a few enslaved persons working as "hands" alongside the families who owned them. Otherwise, New World slavery had come to resemble the remote authoritarianism of colonial rule, and the enslaved lived in families of their own, with networks of relatedness extending far beyond the individual farms and plantations on which they lived.

89

Thorn elaborates the fundamental insight of all of these papers across a diverse range of writers. We cannot understand the abstractions of slavery or colonialism until, as she emphasizes, we recognize the individuals who were enslaved or the people subjected to colonial authority and experience — somehow, if only imaginatively — something of what they endured. She cites some of the many ways in which writers, often themselves of colonial or enslaved backgrounds, insist on including the perspective of the "subaltern," the slave, the colonized. Thus the central American Maya, peoples of the Caribbean, Africans, Plains Indians, and others sense their exclusions from the abstractions dominating the modern social sciences — here including political theories of both slavery and colonialism. It is the same with the famed Equiano and Wheatley, both of whom wrote themselves out of the oblivion of enslavement. Thorn insists on the recoverability of "alternative voices" and provides an energized example of how to hear them.

90.

Historians are meant to sense the meanings of events to the people who made them, thus to explain not only "who did what," but also "how and why" they did. The literary backgrounds of the majority of the contributors to this collection of papers, notably including Thorn, seem productive in penetrating to the lived experiences, the significances, of enslavement and colonial rule alike. They are not conducting their pursuit of "others" through decontextualized abstractions but rather by situating all of the people they encounter in their times and their places, thus historicizing their treatments. Their emphasis on context parallels the fundamental strategy of the preceding more abstract discussion of the incompatibility of colonialism and slavery, which examined neither of these entities in abstracted isolation but rather considered the competitive contexts on which individuals — kings, merchants, masters, the enslaved, the colonized — had their eyes as they colonized and enslaved.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Charles Verlinden, "Esclavitud medieval en Europa y esclavitud colonial en Am rica," *Revista de la Universidad Nacional de C rdoba: Homenaje a Monse or P. Cabrera* 1 (1958): 177-91; Translated as "Esclavage m di val en Europe et esclavage colonial en Am rique," *Cahiers de l'Institut des*

*hautes Études de l'Amérique latine* 6 (1964): 27-45; also translated as "Medieval Slavery in Europe and Colonial Slavery in America (trans. Yvonne Freccero)," in *The Beginnings of Modern Colonization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 33-51.

For the major work, see Charles Verlinden, *Péninsule ibérique*. France, vol. 1 of *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale* (Brugge: De Tempel, 1955), and, later *Italie - Colonies italiennes du Levant - Levant latin - Empire byzantin*, vol. 2 of *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale* (Ghent: Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, 1977).

2 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press, 1974), subsequent volumes, and many papers.

3 Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World," *Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion*, III, 3, Fall 1973, 1-11. "The Three Stages of African Involvement into the World-Economy," in Peter C.W. Cutkind & Immanuel Wallerstein, *Political Economy of Contemporary Africa. Vol. I of Sage Series on Modernization and Development*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976, 30-57. [Revised ed., 1985, 35-63]

4 Eric Wolf's now-classic phrase as the title of his *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982), with acknowledged inspiration from Hegel.

5 Roman imperial conquests combined territorial rule (colonies) with slaving. This apparent anomaly calls attention to the "modern" quality of the imperial "systems" that seem to render slavery and colonialism incompatible. Roman armies financed themselves and the empire they created essentially by plunder, including captives sent to Italy and elsewhere in slavery; cultivators left in the provinces presumably worked as peasants on domains that sustained the ensuing Roman administration from local resources. Except for small areas accessible by sea or riverain transport, the "peripheral" (or semi-peripheral) utilization ("exploitation") of remote conquests was much less intense in the ancient economy than it became with modern commercialization after about the seventeenth century. The provinces were not "colonies" integrated into an economic "system" but rather primarily local domains, a kind of *cursus honorarum*, through which ambitious military aristocrats advanced careers ideally leading back to Rome.

6 Not the same emphasis as may be found in a thoughtful examination of the relevance of Marx's thought to Africa; Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, with foreword by Paul E. Lovejoy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); trans. by Alide Dasnois from *Anthropologie de l'esclavage: le ventre de fer et d'argent* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986).

7 The apparent African exception of the Dutch East India Company's colony at the continent's southern tip in fact proves the rule, since local Khoi populations there succumbed early in the eighteenth century to European diseases, and the Company then tried to develop the economic potential of the region by importing Asians and Africans as slaves.

Other European outposts in Africa and throughout Asia were essentially negotiated expatriate enclaves along the coast (sometimes termed "trading posts," from the point of view of the Europeans), dependent on local sponsors and also turning to enslaved imported labor out of their inability to draw significantly on the laboring forces resident in the surrounding region.

8 A methodological aside: since interpretations, historical or sociological, present arbitrarily selected aspects of human experiences that are in fact infinitely multiplistic, I claim no particular primacy for the pair that I accent here. If a rationalization justifies my choice, it is probably that politics and economics (or political economy) restate in historical terms the principal social-science aspects featured in the existing scholarly literature on both colonialism and slavery. One could extend the effort to historicize into culture, psychology, and other more humanistic recent spheres of understanding the experience.

In making this explicitly historical move, I also distinguish sharply the abstracted implicitly theoretical first part of the title of this journal from its second, explicitly historical component, perhaps moreso than the unproblematized conjoining of the two normally connotes.

9 Both recent major explorations of the origins of the "Atlantic system" focus, in differing registers, on the preceding process of European self-definition as "Christian," largely in contrastive reaction to the splendid and threatening unity of the Muslim oecumene to the south and east; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of*



*New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern* (London, New York: Verso, 1997); David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas: The English in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

10 The military/merchant contrast, locked in an uneasy embrace of mutual dependency, dominates. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*.

11 A point highlighted very promisingly in Mary Nyquist, "Arbitrary Rule, Revolution and Abolition" (University of Nottingham, Institute for the Study of Slavery & "Discourses of Abolition," 13-15 September 2004). This broad suspicion of absolute power gradually became focused on the status of Africans purchased and owned throughout the Atlantic, though North American patriots resurrected it in the eighteenth century, in precisely its original sense, to protest what they viewed as the unjustified exertions of British monarchical power over its subjects in the New World.

12 Often casually viewed through the lens of later New World legislation applied to entirely different circumstances than medieval Iberia. In Castile, the issue was the eligibility for enslavement of the many different ethnic and religious groups in the recently reconquered peninsula, with the strong interest of the nascent Castilian monarchy lying in limiting the control that competing warlords might gain over the populations who lived on the lands they conquered, and particularly also the often-Jewish merchant community.

13 The actual premise of Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982): that "societal" standing is primary in enabling individual autonomy. The point is valid, insofar as the further premise is the primacy of the individual. The latter value explicitly did not apply to a society based on fealty, thus relationships and belonging, rather than individualism.

14 I prefer "composite," since the logic of the word prioritizes the elements assembled to compose a political entity, while "compound" refers to the resulting entity and thus logically backgrounds its components. "Composite" thus refers to the multiple interests that tended to resort to slaving to protect themselves from amalgamation into chemically transformed parts of a singular "compound."

15 This political perspective on slaving &€" incidentally

â€™ resolves the apparent paradox of government (that is, royal) ownership of slaves. Spain staffed key royal military installations, particularly in the Caribbean, with slaves owned by the monarchy itself. By emphasizing that royal "government" was not "of/by/for the people" but rather a largely external (and only problematically imposing) presence in a prosperous commercial and very cosmopolitan environment like Havana's, it becomes obvious that the most reliable agents of the Crown would be people no ties in the local society. Military officers, and particularly local militia, were compromised by conflicting family ties and connections of other sorts. Slaves alone were not. See, *inter alia*, Maria Elena DÃaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

"Royal slaves" thus appeared under government control in complexly contested political environments in the Americas, just as they did all-but-ubiquitously in polities â€™ Muslim or not â€™ throughout Africa and Asia. The most recent and thoughtful study of "royal slavery" is Sean Stilwell, *Paradoxes of Power: The Kano "Mamluk" and Male Royal Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1804-1903* (London: Heinemann, 2004); see Stilwell's bibliography for the large range of scholarly works on this political strategy of slaving.

16 Compare the use of private corporations, "concessionary companies," structural equivalents of sixteenth-century *conquistadores* in the Americas during the early phases (1880s-1910s) of Europe's colonial conquest of Africa. Also see further comments below.

17 Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, "Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800" (PhD diss., University of California â€™ Los Angeles, 2003); also Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

18 Sue Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

19 Rather than the intellectual elegance favored by nearly all French scholars, or the hints of modern humanistic sensibilities sensed by neo-abolitionist

Anglophone commentators; see Alan Watson, "The Origins of the *Code noir* Revisited," *Tulane Law Review*, 71, no. 4 (1997): 1041-72, and Vernon V. Palmer, "The Origins and Authors of the *Code Noir*," *Louisiana Law Review* 56, no. 2 (1995): 363-90, and reprinted in Judith K. Schafer and Warren M. Billings, eds., *An Uncommon Experience: Law and Judicial Proceedings in Louisiana, 1803-2003* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1997), 331-59.

20 One may note here and elsewhere in this continuing dialectic the advantages that monarchical, and later national, authority gained from depicting an inhumane systi;½me in the worst possible light.

21 The Dutch impulse to territorial control abroad focused on the Indian Ocean, and so Atlantic enterprise remained essentially commercial, based on commercial slaving, as far east as the Cape of Good Hope. Dutch colonialism in the Atlantic thus remained muted.

22 The best contextualized study of this process is Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), which nicely frames the ambitions of minor merchants in the small port of Vannes in the 1720s.

23 Indrani Chatterjee, "Colouring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines and Social Orphans under the East India Company," *Subaltern Studies* 10 (1999): 49-97; also *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

24 Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2003) is the survey of choice of American slavery. In the context of this argument, however, it remains focused on the relations of slaves to their masters, and those masters' political and social cultures, rather than on the position of the masters in relation to the British crown, or the government of the United States.

25 Here I summarize a line of argument that I elaborate in "Abolition as Discourse: Slavery as Civic Abomination" ( conference on "Discourses of Abolition," University of Nottingham, Institute for the Study of Slavery, 13-15 September, 2004).

26 For the larger political-economic dynamics, see David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1987).

[27](#) Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), and many subsequent studies.

[28](#) Suzanne Miers, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (New York: Africana Pub. Corp., 1975).

[29](#) The complex dynamics of using slave dependents to assert personal power against a prevailing ethos of collective responsibility and mutual obligation are treated best in Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*.

[30](#) For a recent and thoughtful survey, see Martin A. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[31](#) Suzanne Miers and Martin Klein, eds., "Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa," *Slavery and Abolition*, 19, no. 2 (1998), special issue . Also as *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1999).

[32](#) This is a political dimension of the economic connection between "slavery and capitalism" first proposed by Eric Williams, and more recently refined by Barbara Solow and Robin Blackburn. See Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), republished with new intro. by Colin A. Palmer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Barbara L. Solow, ed., *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge MA: W. E. B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern* (London, New York: Verso, 1996)

[33](#) An adaptation of the point developed by Benedict Anderson as *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended ed., 2nd ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1991).

[34](#) In this sense the *caudillismo* of the Spanish republics and the *capitães* in imperial Brazil created a kind of informal rough-and-ready republicanism that obviated the theoretical democracy of these nations' constitutions.

[35](#) Recently the subject of a popular history, Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed,*

*Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

[36](#) Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*.

[37](#) A comment on Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998): Gomez uses several relatively ethnographic characterizations of the parts of Africa from which enslaved people were brought to North America to suggest general regional origins for specific African practices of the slavery era in the United States. However, his use of the same WPA narratives shows, in effect, how radically the expression of similar ideas had changed by the early twentieth century.

Within the set of papers presented here, the same contrast emerges between the very specific ritual murder in Limb<sup>3</sup>n and Angola and the much more abstracted, coded, and adapted expression of "talkin' to tools" and the "flying Africans." These dynamics of story-telling parallel Africanists' understanding of the "oral traditions" that they study. My own (initial) thoughts along these lines appeared some while ago in "Listening for the African Past," in *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History* (Folkestone: Wm. Dawson and Sons, 1980), 1-59.

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