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Being a Slave

*Histories and Legacies
of European Slavery
in the Indian Ocean*



EDITED BY ALICIA SCHRIKKER
AND NIRA WICKRAMASINGHE

LEIDEN
UNIVERSITY PRESS

BEING A SLAVE

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Histories and Legacies of European Slavery
in the Indian Ocean

Edited by

*Alicia Schrikker
and
Nira Wickramasinghe*

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Private Conversations with World Historians, 1996-2016. (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2017). Her most recent publications deal with socio-legal history, slavery, historic disaster and colonial mentality in the Indian Ocean.

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Source: exhibited image of Sumatra Post, 1902 (photograph by author on location).

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P R E F A C E

Looking at Indian Ocean Multiple Forms of Slavery

Françoise Vergès

*Our skin re-traumatizes the sea
They mock us
For not being able to throw ourselves into something that was instrumen-
tal in trying to execute our extinction.
For you, the ocean is for surf boards, boats and tans
And all the cool stuff you do under there in your bathing suits and goggles
But we, we have come to be baptised here
We have come to stir the other world here
We have come to cleanse ourselves here
We have come to connect our living to the dead here
Our respect for water is what you have termed fear
The audacity to trade and murder us over water
Then mock us for being scared of it
The audacity to arrive by water and invade us*

Koleka Putuma, "Water," 2016¹

In this poem South African poetess Koleka Putuma beautifully captures the strong emotions that black peoples attach to the sea. From the sea came the slavers, the colonizers, the soldiers, the merchants and the missionaries, and most did not have it in mind to engage in peaceful encounters. And though the routes and roads of enslavement are not exclusively maritime, the sea has been associated with exile and deportation in the hold of a ship, and the ship with despair, with stench and with death. However, whereas Paul Gilroy could speak of *the Black Atlantic*,² the "broad geographical space spanning multiple locations of the Indian Ocean world" and the existence of varying degrees of bondage "from eastern Africa to the Philippines" requires a strong

multi-directional and multi-layered approach. Hence the astute and insightful choice of the co-editors, Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe, for “a variety of disciplinary approaches”.

Growing up on Réunion Island, once a French slave colony and now an overseas department, I never heard of slavery at school. I learned about slavery at home and while listening to *maloya*, the music, performance, oral poetry and ritual to the ancestors created by the descendants of slaves from Madagascar and Mozambique, enriched by sounds of the Indian indentured workforce. In Mauritius, the “sister island”, which had also been a French slave colony, the history of the slave trade and slavery was long ignored and the very existence of Afro-Mauritians denied. In both former colonies, the white elites downplayed the existence of bonded labour which built their wealth and racism played its role in undermining the importance of slavery in the making of Creole societies. Slavery is not yet an important topic in schools and universities around the Indian Ocean. Movements for a reappropriation of that history came from the anti-colonial and anti-racist front in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, memorials have been built around the Indian Ocean, and publications, exhibitions, documentaries, conferences, novels, songs and poems have brought to light the history and memories of enslavement. The archaeology of slavery in this region of the world, which is in its infancy, will certainly reveal more and there are archives still to be looked at. A lot remains to be uncovered. The vast Indian Ocean, which carries the memories of enslaved and indentured workers, still has much to say about the lives and afterlives of slaves.

This is why *Being a Slave. Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean* is an important volume. The variety of its authors, topics and approaches contributes to a rare intra-disciplinary conversation on enslavement in the Indian Ocean.

Notes

1. Koleka Putuma, “Water” *Pen South Africa*, last modified 15 June 2016, <https://pensouthafrica.co.za/water-by-koleka-putuma>.
2. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and the Black Consciousness* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

INTRODUCTION

Enslaved in the Indian Ocean, 1700–1850¹

Alicia Schrikker and Nira Wickramasinghe

Slaves were central to the East India Companies established by various European powers throughout the Indian Ocean world.² However, slavery and colonies have been relegated to the margins in the national histories of European states, even if memories of slavery have become a part of public discourse in former slaving empires such as France and the Netherlands. This edited volume brings into dialogue the histories of enslaved people and the legacies of slavery that unfold in a broad geographical space spanning multiple locations of the Indian Ocean world. To paint such a wide spatial and temporal canvas a variety of disciplinary approaches seem necessary as well as productive. Historians, literary scholars and post-colonial scholars can indeed ask different questions regarding the experience of being enslaved and freed, and search for answers by following their own scholarly protocols. They engage differently with source material while the language and conceptual apparatus they use belongs to specific disciplinary traditions. This variety in approaches to the lives of enslaved peoples and their reverberations in the present are, we hope to show, a richness rather than a weakness. Such intra-disciplinary conversations, still rare among slavery scholars of the Indian Ocean, are commonplace in the broader field of colonial studies.

Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, Françoise Vergès, Gloria Wekker, Kristin Ross and many others have stressed the importance of reading colony and empire within the same frame as a “transcultural global process”³ in order to understand the making of post-colonial identities both in Europe and the Global South.⁴ Indian Ocean slavery offers a fascinating terrain for dissecting the connections between the past and the present and the past in the present. While near comprehensive works have been produced that focus on the volume and value of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean world, single volumes that bring together the lives and experiences of slaves in different locales of the Indian Ocean world are rare. Such works when they exist tend to focus on a single location. Yet there is much to gain in looking at the

slave experience in multiple local contexts as it emerged or was transformed through its interaction with European trading companies.

This book has two connected threads. First it examines the lives of enslaved adults and children in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were forcibly shipped by Europeans across the Indian Ocean—from Makassar to Colombo, from Kochi to Cape Town. Second it answers the question: what difference to their lives and futures did abolition bring? Most of the chapters in this volume were first presented at the “Being a Slave: Indian Ocean Slavery in Local Context” workshop organised in Leiden in 2017.⁵ The workshop and this volume were born of a recognition of the need to inflect the direction of Indian Ocean slavery studies by drawing from the rich Atlantic slavery literature using a variety of disciplinary approaches. The workshop presented an opportunity for scholars interested in enslavement to reflect on their own discipline, methods and modes of narrativizing, as well as to consider the limits of their sources and the questions that could be asked of those sources.

There was no attempt to offer a comprehensive view since for practical reasons our scope was limited, but our purpose was to initiate new lines of thought between fields that have often been hermetically closed to each other. Our geographical coverage too was not complete. We would have liked to engage, for instance, with a well established literature in French on the slave experience in Réunion, Pondicherry, Chandernagore and other French settlements in the Indian Ocean world. The pathbreaking work of Prosper Eve on slave bodies on the island of Bourbon, now Réunion, awaits translation from the French.⁶ Instead the workshop benefited from the momentum that the study of Indian Ocean slavery currently has in Dutch academia. The volume therefore gravitates towards locations in the Indian Ocean that have had a Dutch history, such as Ceylon, Cochin, Batavia, Cape Town and Mauritius. In many of these places the history of colonialism is layered, having been in Portuguese or Dutch hands prior to being claimed by the French or the British, and this matters for the way in which cultures of slavery were shaped. When thinking about the legacy of slavery we need to realize that in places like Ceylon, Cape Town, Cochin and Mauritius slave-societies as they developed in Dutch enclaves of the Indian Ocean had an afterlife under British and French colonialism. Furthermore, the contributions by Wagenaar and Tieken remind us that life trajectories of the enslaved encompassed multiple locations across the Indian Ocean. Our focus on the lives of the enslaved allows us to ask questions about the mobility, identity and emotions

Indian Ocean slaves experienced rather than place the Dutch, French and British colonials at the centre. It is their archives that we are after, less so their specific colonial histories.

The literature on the histories of the European Companies tends to do the opposite. If enslaved persons appear at all in the literature, it is only in passing, described as part of the context in which Europeans operated, rather than as subjects of study themselves. This point is best illustrated by the fascinating biography of Joan Gideon Loten, a high-ranking official in the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the mid-eighteenth century. This 600-page biography sheds light on the everyday presence of the enslaved in and around the Company. In it we encounter enslaved persons in many capacities: in Makassar (South Sulawesi) we come across men and women forced into slavery by Loten's Dutch colleagues, who were actively involved in violent slave raiding and trading in the region; in Colombo we encounter a slave orchestra in the private household of Loten's daughter; and in Utrecht we meet Sittie, who was a young girl when she was given to Loten as a diplomatic "gift" by the ruler of Bone. She accompanied him during his years in office across the ocean, from Makassar to Batavia, and then to Colombo, finally settling with his family in Utrecht, where she outlived him despite suffering from the cold climate.⁷

This remarkable biography of Loten is based on an extremely rich set of sources; the author, Lex Raat, takes us through the private and official life of an individual in the eighteenth century, who became known for his natural history collection and activities as Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society. Loten's biography would not be the most obvious source for scholars interested in the history of enslaved people in the Indian Ocean world, as nothing in the title suggests that it contains those histories. In this aspect, it is consistent with histories of European trading companies and settlements in Asia as a whole, where slaves do feature but are seldom the focus. The histories of enslaved individuals are so inextricably bound up with the histories of those companies that one often fails to see them, but once we begin to notice and search for them we find them mentioned throughout literary and archival sources—in cargo lists and business transactions; last wills, legal cases, and government ordinances; governors' reports; and private papers such as those of Joan Gideon Loten.

The historical setting of Indian Ocean slavery

When we talk about slaves in this contribution we refer in particular to chattels, persons owned by a master who could be bought or sold like other commodities and were often shipped across the ocean. We are fully aware that this definition is limited, especially within the context of Indian Ocean societies where the slaves came from, where slavery is generally understood as being at one extreme end of a broad spectrum of bondage.

While it is impossible to do justice to the many specific regional studies that have been carried out in the past, the work of historians such as Anthony Reid, Gwyn Campbell and Indrani Chatterjee helps us understand in general terms the place of slavery in Indian Ocean societies.⁸ First, it is important to point out that from eastern Africa to the Philippines most people lived in varying degrees of bondage. The concept of personal freedom as we envisage it today was virtually absent and, instead, a person's position in society was determined by the social relationships and forms of bondage that were cultivated or imposed. Alessandro Stanziani has shown that until the end of the nineteenth century free labour was globally more the exception than the rule globally, and Western approaches to labour rights were much more repressive than earlier believed.⁹ In South Asia, caste was one of the factors that determined hierarchies of bondage and a person's social position in society. Caste relations carried intrinsic obligations, services and social protection. In eastern Indonesia individuals belonging to so-called slave communities lived mostly as free persons, according to early nineteenth-century observers. The position of these slaves in society resembled that of *corvée* workers who had to labour in the fields of the elites at certain intervals.¹⁰ Reid, Campbell and Chatterjee make the point that slavery as a Western concept does not do much to help us understand the hierarchies of unfreedom in Indian Ocean societies, and they prefer to speak about "degrees of bondage". They argue that bonded individuals in principle remained part of the social environment in which they were born, and that social customs prevented them from being simply bought and sold at a market. In this respect, the authors maintain, enslavement in European enclaves—what could be termed colonial slavery—differed significantly from local forms of bondage.¹¹

This is not to say that the European slave trade was a new phenomenon unrelated to more direct and situational forms of slavery in the region. It is likely that the consistent and high colonial demand reinforced certain slaving practices in the region, changing the structure of slavery in the process. It is

generally understood that personal enslavement could be caused by crisis, be it climatic, financial or violent. Traditionally, famine, debt and conflict were the main precursors to enslavement. Parents would sell their children in times of famine; individuals might offer themselves or, more often, their wives and daughters as security for a debt; or captivity could be the result of outright warfare.¹² A crisis may have increased the vulnerability of non-elite groups to enslavement, but it is probable that such crises were at times deliberately orchestrated. Sanjay Subrahmanyam has masterfully analysed how, in seventeenth-century Arakan (Myanmar), Portuguese and Dutch traders benefited from and enhanced regional conflict and food crises, which enabled them to gain slaves at low prices and profit from the rice trade.¹³ The work of Jim Warren shows that outright slave raiding in Eastern Indonesia and the Sulu Archipelago became a general feature of the political economy of the Sultanate of Sulu during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the Indonesian archipelago, coastal societies became particularly vulnerable to slave raiding and kidnapping when global markets for slaves in China and in the Mascarene Islands expanded. In other areas such as Jaffna in Sri Lanka, low-caste people were framed by the Dutch as slaves and then treated as such, thereby directly influencing the local social structure to satisfy the need for labour.¹⁴ Such processes of commodification of bonded persons were brought about by European trade in other regions as well, for example, through contracts with local rulers, as was the case in Bali and Timor.¹⁵

Indian Ocean slavery studies is a relatively young field. It has traditionally been caught between regional labour studies and historical studies of European trade and colonialism. The former tend to focus on particular structures in the political economy of local societies that sustained forms of bondage and slavery, while the latter tend to downplay the stakes of the European commercial companies in slavery and the slave trade, and generally frame slavery in the Indian Ocean region as “mild”, echoing colonial phrasing. More recently, historians have begun quantitatively studying the place of the European slave trade within European trade, and in the process have revealed a much larger than expected presence of enslaved people in the urban space of European port cities. These new studies show how Europeans created new political economies of slavery within their expanding enclaves in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, there is general consensus that the expansion of capitalism and the growth of global markets led to the expansion of slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In diverse regions of the Indian Ocean, therefore, we find a plurality of cultures of slavery that

overlapped, intersected and coincided, and were connected by expanding shipping networks. Ulbe Bosma recently argued that “the lines between debt and captive slavery and between customary and commodified slavery were much more blurred than colonial civil servants – followed by scholarly literature – have suggested”.¹⁶

Enslavement, in the sense of large-scale commodification of humans, came about through the interaction of Europeans and Indian Ocean society, and this book aims to look at that phenomenon from the perspective of enslaved individuals. What did it mean for people to be caught in this Indian Ocean web of slavery? It is not our aim to present a comprehensive analysis of local–European interactions, or suggest that the experiences of slavery reported in this book were universal. The stories in these chapters move between Mauritius and Madagascar, Jakarta and Kochi, Colombo and Cape Town, and explore the experience of being enslaved and life after slavery in these diverse locations. Furthermore, the book includes accounts of cultural memories of slavery, which reveal the commonalities in experiences of slavery across the Indian Ocean, and its long-lasting effects.

After being bought or caught, enslaved individuals were transported to slave markets in the various Indian Ocean port cities, from where they were transhipped to new places that were alien to them in culture and geography. By this process enslaved people from the Indian Ocean could end up in the Middle East, the Americas, China or Europe, though most remained within the Indian Ocean realm.¹⁷ Analyses of the trade circuits of the different European companies by historians Richard Allen, Markus Vink, Linda Mbeki and Matthias van Rossum show major shifts in the origins and destinations of the enslaved over time. In the seventeenth century, for example, South Asia was an important source of slaves for the Dutch as they built up Batavia (now Jakarta), but in the eighteenth century these enslaved people were partly replaced by those from the Indonesian archipelago. Some slaves from the Indonesian archipelago were also taken to Colombo and the Cape. The Dutch sanctioned slavery through legislation and registration, and benefitted from the trade through customs. In all Dutch territories, slavery provided cheap and secure labour in parallel to local forms of forced labour. It is assumed that most of the slaves under the Dutch were traded privately by VOC employees.

Richard Allen estimates that up to around 90,000 people were traded by the VOC across the Indian Ocean between 1600 and 1800, Van Rossum and Mbeki suggest that this number will be much higher when private trade

is taken into account.¹⁸ Furthermore, much less is known about the size of the slave trade to and from Dutch territories in Indonesia in the nineteenth century. Ulbe Bosma's recent book gives an estimate of the numbers involved in nineteenth-century slavery in Island Southeast Asia which include captive and commercially traded slaves and debt slaves. They range, according to him, between 701,500 and 970,500.¹⁹ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the French accounted for the largest share of the slave trade, with the Mascarene Islands as its epicentre. There, the eighteenth-century plantation economy created a high demand for labour, which was satisfied by importing slaves from Madagascar and India and, to a lesser extent, from the Swahili Coast and Southeast Asia. Allen estimates that this trade resulted in the transport of up to 380,000 people across the Indian Ocean.²⁰

Records indicate that the British were tapping the same sources, but that their volume of trade in enslaved humans was much smaller. The abolition of the slave trade by Britain in 1807 and of slavery in 1833 led to the early suppression of the trade among British traders in the Indian Ocean. The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was an Act by the Parliament of the United Kingdom abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire (with the exceptions of "the Territories in the Possession of the East India Company", Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, and Saint Helena). The exceptions were abolished in 1843 and 1844. Subsequently additional articles prohibited certain officers of The Honourable East India Company from being involved in the purchase of slaves, but they did not actually abolish slavery in India. It was the provisions of the Indian Penal Code 1860 which effectively abolished slavery in India by making the enslavement of human beings a criminal offence. But, as Indrani Chatterjee has insightfully illustrated, those who were freed through abolition became instant targets for recruitment as indentured labourers or soldiers in order to satisfy the relentless labour demand throughout the empire.²¹ The ambivalent and unfinished nature of abolition comes to light in a number of the contributions featured in this multidisciplinary volume, notably those by Yvette Christiansë and Pamela Scully. The collaboration of historians, anthropologists and literary scholars is particularly productive in shedding light on the long-lasting cultural legacies of slavery, abolition and indenture in the region.

Seeing slaves

While this book is attentive to the particular experiences of the enslaved person caught in the web of Indian Ocean slavery, its authors are deeply aware that the archive produced by the colonial state does not highlight the perspectives of the enslaved. *Seeing* the slave in colonial documentation entails forcing the archive to break silences,²² a process which has inherent difficulties. How archives are constituted in territories under colonial rule, the forms they take, and the foray into the “grids of intelligibility” that produces the evidential paradigms mentioned by Carlo Ginsburg have been central to the discussion of the archive as “the supreme technology of the late nineteenth century imperial state”.²³ Sources do not exist just to be mined for content. This approach warrants caution when exploring the textual material available to reconstruct the lives of enslaved people in the Indian Ocean world. The paucity of sources first needs to be underlined.

In contrast to the rich scholarship on the Atlantic slave trade, the Indian Ocean world lacks slave narratives or freedom tales that have triggered the imaginations of historians and directed them to a more personal and intimate approach to the history of slavery. The genre of literature now known as “slave narratives” or “freedom narratives”, which recounts the lives of African slaves in North America and the Carribean—such as the canonical writings of Harriet Tubman, Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass and Olaudah Equiano—is invaluable for bringing to life the story of capture, enslavement, transportation, and finally emancipation from the perspective of the enslaved.²⁴ Many of these texts were inspired by the Calvinist genre of captivity narrative, and were edited by prominent abolitionists for use in their anti-slavery campaigns.²⁵ These narratives were written in an autobiographical and sociological style for a primarily white and female readership, and were constrained by the demands placed upon them by their main sponsor and consumer, the abolitionist movement, which wanted texts written in a style that sounded “truthful and believable”.²⁶

By contrast, the texts wrenched from colonial archives—petitions, testimonies of slaves and letters about them—do not suffer from this need to show a visible sign of reason or a shared humanity. Instead, they come to us mediated, incomplete and drawing on different types of conventions and tropes. They were not produced in order to prove slaves’ humanity and personhood, but they stage them at the centre of events where their own claim for recognition comes to the fore. Though personal accounts such as

slave diaries, autobiographies, letters and stories are missing, there is an alternative kind of narrative preserved in the form of judicial records. Legal cases have become a mainstay of cultural history despite being mediated and translated; as such, the historian often performs the role of a detective in order to reconstruct events recorded partially or those subjected to the vagaries of memory.²⁷

Many of the authors of this volume were inspired by the work of scholars who have focused on the enslaved or bonded individual as a lens to understanding a social system. Our understanding of the individual lives of subaltern people in the nineteenth-century Indian Ocean world has been considerably enriched by Meghan Vaughn's portraits of enslaved individuals in Mauritius, Marina Carter's exploration of the experiences of indentured workers, and, more recently, Clare Anderson's life writing approach.²⁸ The ably researched works of Kerry Ward, Ronit Ricci and Michael Laffan have recently traced the movement of Southeast Asian exiles and convicts between Batavia, Java, the Cape Colony and Sri Lanka.²⁹ The rich historiography on slavery in the Cape of Good Hope has yielded fascinating stories of enslaved people whose lives appeared in the VOC archives at moments of crisis or conflict, when it was necessary for them to be recorded.³⁰ As Nigel Worden reminds us, "slaves survived in the paper archive by default rather than by design".³¹ Sue Peabody's more recent master–slave narrative of Madeleine—sold into slavery in the 1760s in Chandernagor—and her son Furcy in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries meticulously explores what it meant to be a slave, and then free, in the Mascarenes Islands. Furcy was born a slave but became the head of a bourgeois household and a slave owner himself.³² Exceptional stories such as his and that of Malik Ambar, the Abyssinian slave who became the de facto ruler of the Ahmednagar Sultanate in the Deccan, or that of Untung Suropati recounted in the Javanese epic *Babad Tanah Jawi* are uncommon tales that should not eclipse the stories of those who never won or whose lives ended tragically.³³ The essays in this book focus on the biographies of ordinary enslaved people rather than the heroes, and show methodological affinities with the bottom-up approach of microhistory.³⁴

This volume is unique in its treatment of enslavement in the Indian Ocean world insofar as it combines history, literary analysis and a post-colonial articulation of ideas in order to reconstruct untold narratives of the past, and better understand hauntings in the present. As Guno Jones' contribution to this volume shows, the story does not end with abolition. Rebecca Scott,

Thomas Holt and Frederick Cooper urge historians to go “beyond slavery” in order to observe continuities in labour regimes in post-slavery societies.³⁵ Much can be learned from scholarly work on the Atlantic slave trade. Saidiya Hartman’s revisionary history of the legacy of slavery in antebellum America warns against making absolute distinctions between the categories of “slavery” and “freedom”, and suggests that the liberal notions of free will, rights, and responsibility are feeble instruments of social transformation.³⁶ Insofar as it is not limited to a single approach, the book creates imaginative narratives of the mobility, social interaction, violence and resistance that shaped the lives of the enslaved. The multidisciplinary approach further helps us to take a longer-term view of the process of enslavement—an approach that considers other forms of unfreedom and seeks to understand the cultural legacies of slavery and its hauntings in the present. This allows us to consider the history of enslavement as erasure, absence and forgetting.³⁷

Narrating through the archive: mobility, emotions, identities

The first part of this volume focuses on the eighteenth-century Dutch and French Indian Ocean and uses different techniques to bring to life the enslaved individuals whose stories are captured in the VOC and French archives. A focus on experiences of individual slaves allows the authors to raise questions about mobility, emotions and identification aspects that were relevant to their lives and those of their children, rather than to those of their masters. The first chapter by Marina Carter probes issues of ethnicity and identity in the colonial Indian Ocean world, focusing in particular on Indian slaves in Mauritius. The slave diaspora from the Indian subcontinent has received much less attention than the diaspora of slaves of African origin, another example of what Richard Allen calls the “tyranny of the Atlantic”. The paucity of the archive, writes Carter, is compounded by its ambiguity. Toponyms such as “of Malabar” or “of Bengal” often refer to the last port of call, not the person’s origin, and the French term *Indien* referred to a person from China or Southeast Asia as well. Being categorized in such generic ways formed an essential aspect of slavery and led to a conflation of identities. The contribution by Christiansë in the second part of the volume picks up on this theme when she argues that being registered formed an essential experience that those who were enslaved and indentured shared. Carter interrogates the stereotype that, although few in number, slaves who were identified

as Indians constituted an “elite among the servile”. They crossed cultural, ethnic, religious and racial boundaries, and brought local knowledge, sexual labour and domestic expertise into their relationships with Europeans. Sue Peabody’s story of Furcy epitomizes the trajectory of this group, when shedding his slave ancestry as he merged into Creoleness.

Kerry Ward and Ronit Ricci draw our attention to the way in which the Dutch labour and legal regime created new and enduring ties between South and Southeast Asia, and Southern Africa. The enslaved people who were shipped across the ocean found themselves in the company of exiles and convicts. Sri Lanka and the Cape were major destinations for convicts, while Batavia and Colombo served as the most important ports of departure. Herman Tieken’s contribution, which tells the story of the Ceylonese Chettiyar Nicolaas Ondaatje at the Cape, demonstrates the entanglement of the lives of exiled convicts and slaves. Tieken reconstructs Ondaatje’s familiarity with slavery through an analysis of the letters he received from family and friends in Galle, Colombo, which were retrieved from the Dutch notarial archives in Cape Town. The letters themselves, mainly written in Tamil, provide a unique perspective on the VOC world from its fringes, a world permeated with slavery. Though technically a convict, he was allowed to move freely, but this also meant that he had to earn his own keep. In this he did not succeed in Cape Town and had soon to move on to the outlying districts, making a living as a home teacher, a notoriously low-paid job. For simple things such as clothes – and areca nuts – he remained dependent on his family in Ceylon. Ondaatje’s exile was a constant topic of deliberation within the family. From the very beginning Ondaatje tried to make some money by selling an occasional slave, which he ordered from his contacts in Ceylon. Apparently, his own sad existence as an exile did not prevent him from making others suffer the same fate. This, he argues, could be explained by the intimate presence of enslaved children in the Ondaatje family household, who are made visible in the letters through the discussion of the fate of the two former slaves, Flora and Hannibal. Tieken’s contribution highlights the variation in slave experiences and social contexts in which slaves and slave-owners moved, and illustrates the necessity of understanding the very diverse trajectories through slavery which Carter highlighted.

The contributions by the historians Alexander Geelen, Bram van den Hout, Merve Tosun and Matthias van Rossum, Kate Ekama and Lodewijk Wagenaar direct our focus to enslaved individuals themselves, as actors in the Dutch Indian Ocean. At the core of each of these chapters is the interaction

between enslaved people and the local criminal courts of the VOC, and the subsequent production of legal files and registers through which fragments of the lives of enslaved individuals are pieced together. Involvement in theft, violence and escape is the main cause of these men and women appearing in the records, but the records also inform us about the circumstances under which these acts were committed, the accomplices involved, and the locations where plans were made. The culture of legality brought by the Dutch resulted in a very active system of justice and policing in the various port cities under Dutch rule.³⁸ Minutes of the proceedings of the criminal courts of Cape Town and Batavia were even sent to the Netherlands, and while they were probably never read at the time, they now provide historians with invaluable information about the social and cultural history of the enslaved. Social historians such as Eric Jones, Bondan Kanumoyoso, and Henk Niemeijer have already shown how such sources can be employed to more broadly reconstruct social life in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Batavia.³⁹ In the 1980s and 1990s, historians of the Cape such as Nigel Worden and Robert Ross paved the way by using such records imaginatively to analyse slave life and resistance at the Cape. The work of Geelen et al. and Ekama has been inspired by this rich tradition of scholarship.

Since the court records that provide us with shards of evidence of slave life come to us mediated through institutional conventions and the writings of clerks and translators, to what extent can they be used to write historical narratives from the perspective of the enslaved? Geelen et al., Ekama and Wagenaar each recognize this problem, and deal with it in different ways. In their chapter on mobility and work, Geelen et al. seek a solution in quantity and comparison: by creating a database of all court cases involving slaves in Cochin and Batavia, and by comparing work locations and types of activities of the enslaved, they manage to draw a broader picture of the spatial mobility of slaves and the actual work in which they were engaged in both towns. In both places, trust, skills and control turn out to be defining factors in shaping mobility, meaning that mobility and work were defined not so much by location as by talent and social relations—conditions that presumably differed from person to person. Yet in all cases the enslaved remained subject to strong mechanisms of social control exerted by the Company.

Social relations are central to Ekama's contribution on slave life in Colombo. Through a number of compelling examples, she shows that social relations were forged across lines of freedom and unfreedom. Her masterful analysis of the case of the copper bowl theft shows how the tavern and the

area around the church formed important meeting places for the underclass of Colombo, including the enslaved. The case clearly shows that the social relations forged by the enslaved crossed social and ethnic barriers when opportunity arose—the enslaved Amber worked with the Javanese convict Troena de Wangso, and Andries, a man labelled as Sinhalese. Ekama's method differs from that of Geelen et al. in that she combines an analysis of the actors who feature in legal cases with an analysis of other records from the town administration, such as wills, manumission deeds and colonial ordinances. Read together, these records provide insight into the diversity in social relations that were forged by, or forced onto, the enslaved, and paint a rich picture of the intimate relations among the enslaved and beyond enslavement.

The marriage in Colombo's slave lodge (*materiaalhuis*) between Apollo and Diana—both Malay-speaking and of Southeast Asian origin—suggests that their shared language and background might have given them some sense of security in their vulnerable situation. Most intimate relations will have been of a less voluntary nature, and coercion and opportunity must have played a role. Ekama discusses this last point by focusing on relationships between slave women and European men: one that led to manumission and marriage, and another that resulted, surprisingly, in the prosecution of a soldier accused of rape. Being enslaved in Colombo did not mean that the horizons of enslaved people were limited to that town, and often the slaves had come from far away. Escapes from the town to the rural areas of the island occurred. A Sufi amulet from Java helped Deidami endure the trauma of slavery, until desperation led her to kill her mistress in Colombo. In other cases slaves had the strength to imagine themselves, against the odds, as legal persons with the right to prosecute others in the VOC's Indian Ocean legal web. Yet only a few enslaved individuals managed to use the legal system—which had been responsible for defining them exclusively as slaves—to their advantage. The story of Cruz, the central figure in Geelen et al., also reminds us that even if enslaved people were unable to define their place of origin, it was clear that they longed for such a place when overwhelmed with misery. The contribution by Anne Marieke van der Wal in the second part of the volume picks up on this theme as she discusses the ways in which slaves in Cape Town passed this longing for a home across the ocean down through many generations into the present, by means of particular songs.

While Ekama's perceptive reading of the court records, wills and manumission deeds provides insight into the world in which the enslaved

acted, prayed and dreamed, Wagenaar takes his analysis one step further by wondering whether it is possible to understand the emotions of slavery. Inspired by the work of Clare Anderson, Sue Peabody, Saidiya Hartman and Yvette Christiansë, Lodewijk Wagenaar seeks out the liminal areas between historical research and literature. He traces the story of a woman in her late twenties called Boenga van Johor, who was sold at the slave market in Batavia and later sentenced to work in chains in the Cape after she had tried to break her chains and escape from captivity. Wagenaar goes to great length to reconstruct her forced journey from Batavia via Ceylon, where she is shipwrecked, to the Cape, where she eventually disappears from the records. He questions how historians can do justice to the life and experiences of this woman. He argues that the legal files that inform us of her actions and fate do little to help us understand how she would have felt, an issue that is brought up by Ekama as well when she discusses the question of consent in sexual relations. In the case of Boenga, Wagenaar argues, we rely on our imagination to get a sense of her desperation, loneliness and determination; but how far can historians stretch this? By raising these questions and letting his “informed imagination”, as he calls it, play a role in his academic work as a historian Wagenaar actively responds to our call for an interdisciplinary approach to the history of the enslaved. Perhaps it is at the intersection of history and literature that we can best grasp the experience of being enslaved. It might be for this reason that slave descendants often find the histories of their ancestors better and more carefully represented through novels, poetry and songs than through historical reconstruction.

Legacies, memories, absences

What difference did freedom make? The first three chapters in this section provide us with some insight into the transformations that came about with abolition. Yvette Christiansë evokes the emergence of new relations of production on the plantations. The forms of labour discipline that followed the abolition of slavery, the indenture system in particular, aimed at creating a sober and industrious free wage labour. There were however uncanny family resemblances with slavery. Recent research projects have attempted to show these continuities by situating indentured labour migration within a broader narrative of labour mobility in the Indian Ocean region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁰ Christiansë's chapter follows this

path and is a masterful and poetic rendering of the end of slavery in the nineteenth century in the Indian Ocean world. She elucidates the processes that shaped the transformation of slavery into indenture “via the shadow form of apprenticeship” in the vast space called the Indian Ocean world. She interrogates the processes of dissimulation that present unfreedom as liberation. Importantly, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 led to international and maritime patrolling of the seas by admiralty fleets, and the establishing of vice admiralty courts in various ports which adjudicated on the seized vessels.

There were ways, however, for slavers to circumvent these strictures—old Indian Ocean trade routes became the means for slavers to avoid seizure off the west coast of Africa. Those rescued from slavers—who were then referred to as “liberated Africans”—were placed in apprenticeships in places with which they had no connection. They were sent to locations such as Durban, Mauritius, Seychelles, Aden and Bombay by authorities which assumed the role of “guardian” over these individuals. But the number of people placed in these apprenticeships after the abolition of slavery fell short of planters’ needs for labour, at which point South and Southeast Asian “coolies” came to be considered an inexpensive solution. Christiansē examines the bureaucratic strategies used to support legislation and helps us to understand the centrality of the register for controlling slaves, liberated Africans and indentured labour and the continuities between these technologies of surveillance.

The next chapter by Pamela Scully (reprinted from her 1997 book *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853*)⁴¹ addresses the post-abolition world of formerly enslaved people in Cape colony where gender relations assumed a patriarchal structure promoted by the colonial state and former slave owners, often with the acquiescence of the freed men. Freedom, she contends, brought a new form of domination for freed women in male headed households. Later writings that mitigate her argument fail in their efforts to refute it. Mason for instance, argues that the creation of a family structure that had not been allowed under slavery and the ability to work in the household constituted a major source of satisfaction for freed women.⁴²

The abolition of slavery in 1838 in the Cape Colony led to the British crown colony society becoming contested terrain for freed people, missionaries, former slave owners and the state. In the 1840s, thousands of emancipated slaves moved to the missions in the Western Cape, which they perceived as lands of opportunity. Scully examines in detail six cases of

infanticide in rural missions. Through these cases she illustrates the rituals of rule and power connected with a “humanitarian” colonial legal system, in tension with the “morality” displayed by missionaries in mission stations and courts. After 1838, freed women had to negotiate a world where race, gender and sexuality were a battleground between the colonial state and the missionaries. The death sentences of two of the six women convicted by juries were commuted by the chief justice. Colonial officials used the cases to illustrate “the immorality of the crime of infanticide, the wrongheadedness of the missionaries, and the beneficence of British justice”.⁴³ Scully’s text, twenty years later, still remains path-breaking in pointing out the gendered nature of the newly acquired freedom.

Freedom could bring to a freed man a new sense of worth and selfhood, sentiments that one can imagine but that are seldom expressed in writing. Paul Bijl’s chapter is based on a unique nineteenth-century document written in Dutch by a formerly enslaved man called R.H. Wange van Balie from Indonesia, who was taken from Indonesia to Delft in the Netherlands and then emancipated. Bijl reads this unique memoir of a formerly enslaved Indonesian man as an “act of equality” in which Van Balie considers himself socially equal to his white Dutch readers, and capable of moral autonomy and empathy. In many ways, the Netherlands stood out as a place where there was hardly any interest in the plight of slaves, and only rarely was anti-slavery rhetoric heard in the Dutch public sphere. A few well known personalities such as Betje Wolff had expressed opposition to the slave trade and slavery in the late eighteenth century, but these isolated voices failed to spawn an abolitionist organization until the 1840s, when informal circles and liberal clubs emerged in Utrecht and Amsterdam.⁴⁴ On the whole, Dutch abolitionism was small scale, cautious and late, as compared to the British and American movements.⁴⁵ W.R. van Hoëvell’s 1854 book, *Slaves and Free Men under Dutch Law*, the most-read abolitionist publication in the Netherlands, failed to claim political or social equality for slaves and continued to conceive of black people as less “developed” than white people.⁴⁶ Contrary to these texts, Van Balie’s memoir reveals that emancipation meant for former slaves a vindication of equality and moral autonomy.

The memory and legacy of slavery in today’s world are discussed in the last three chapters of this volume, showing us that slavery’s past haunts the present. Remembering slavery can be traumatic for those whose ancestors were associated with it either as enslaved or as the enslavers. This trauma can manifest itself in the refusal of states and individuals to remember—the

white innocence described by Wekker—or in forms of memorializing based on compassion rather than responsibility. Expressing moral outrage or compassion can be problematic insofar as its emphasis on suffering entails a self-congratulatory “humanist” image of oneself.⁴⁷ The chapters by Anne Marieke van der Wal and Sarah Longair reflect on various modes of remembering Indian Ocean slavery in Cape Town and Zanzibar, while Guno Jones’ chapter addresses the silence about and erasure of Indian Ocean slavery in post-colonial Netherlands.

Anne Marieke van der Wal’s analysis of “sea shanties” from Cape Town shows the central place that the Indian Ocean occupies in the cultural memory of the Cape Coloured community, the descendants of Indian Ocean slaves. She draws on the work of Baderoon and Hofmeyr on the “Brown Indian Ocean”, in response to studies of the Black Atlantic.⁴⁸ Van der Wal’s cultural and historical reading of songs sung by members of this community shows how they represent a longing for the East while at the same time supporting, through their rhythms, the hard labour of enslaved and free fishermen, and their families on the shore. The origin of these songs brings us back on board VOC ships, where slaves familiarized themselves with Dutch sailors’ songs and were forced to sing and dance on the deck at particular regulated moments during the day. In one such song young men are encouraged to sign up as sailors so that they can return to “their fatherland”, which in the case of enslaved individuals means the East. Van der Wal brings together the work of Baderoon and Mustakeem by pointing out the duality of the sea’s symbolic power as “being both a barrier and a memento of loss, as well as a symbol of freedom”.⁴⁹ Songs such as these are direct expressions of cultural memory, even if written down at some point by Afrikaner folklorists, and precisely because they are transmitted orally and remain very visible (or audible) today they have a different relationship with the colonial archives.

The archival gaps that make it so difficult to locate and transmit the historical everyday experience of slavery in the Indian Ocean are mirrored by the gaps that one finds in museum collections in the region. In British collections in places like Zanzibar, as much as in the large urban centres, Sarah Longair shows how objects of punishment and confinement are the most prominent artefacts of the Indian Ocean slave experience, paralleling evidence in the legal archives. British collecting practice was particularly skewed towards a particular type of object. Gaps in the material record have only recently begun to be filled by new archaeological projects at sites of enslavement. Longair’s chapter attempts to recreate the world of slavery from

material remnants in British museums. While doing so, she reflects on the logic governing the process of collecting in East Africa and the Indian Ocean world. The yoke (*gorée*) brought back to Britain and displayed in the David Livingstone Centre tells us the predictable story of virtuous abolitionists, but underlying it is an invisible story of enslaved African women who destroyed similar objects of confinement. In some instances, the absent object speaks as powerfully as the displayed object, something Françoise Vergès has intimated in her concept of a museum without objects.⁵⁰ In understanding what being a slave felt like materialities can be revealing.

Modern states with past connections to the slave trade have ambivalent approaches to slavery in the present. French national commemorations, it has been argued, forget slavery while remembering its abolition.⁵¹ The history of slavery is thus reduced to its abolition. Guno Jones examines the strange absence of Asian—especially Indonesian—slavery in Dutch knowledge production and public memory, in contrast to the state involvement in commemorating slavery and its abolition in the West Indies for at least the last twenty years. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, in his classic *Silencing the Past*, shows that silence is not an absence of words, but rather a “discursive silence” or non-presence of slavery through the use of certain philosophical or emotional registers of speech to describe it. In Mauritius and Sri Lanka, too, the Asian slave has disappeared from popular consciousness, with “slave” today connoting only Africans. Nigel Worden points to a similar phenomenon in Cape Town where there is a “neglect of the African and (to a lesser extent) South Asian elements of Cape Town’s slave heritage”, and where the dominant perception is one of a slave heritage that is Muslim and Southeast Asian.⁵² Guno Jones inserts the invisibility of Asian slavery into a deeper reflection on the Dutch inability to recognize the violence of its colonial past, and the Dutch historiographical tradition of separating the history of the metropole from the history of the colonies. The resurgence of discourse on Atlantic slavery in the public sphere is, he argues, related to a vibrant identity politics among members of the Caribbean Dutch communities. This has led to a movement that connects the past and the present, pointing to cultural traces of slavery and its afterlife in everyday Dutch culture. This dissonant voice has until now eluded Asian slavery, creating a bifurcation in the public memory of slavery. Jones points to the need to bring this “absent memory” back into view.

Conclusion

This volume is a patchwork of approaches to Indian Ocean slavery, but each contribution in its own way brings the enslaved person to the fore as a human being navigating larger structures and acting within the constraints of her situation. It includes research from scholarly traditions that are rarely in dialogue, including Sanskrit and Tamil literature, museum studies, history, cultural studies and post-colonial studies. Although each contribution varies in its approach to source material and in writing style, the editors have not attempted to mould them into a template. The result is a diverse set of chapters that are in conversation—and sometimes in tension—with each other, which represents creative new readings of the histories and legacies of slavery and abolition in the Indian Ocean. The careful literary analysis of one text by Paul Bijl might help historians to recognize scripted forms expressed in the archive, while Yvette Christiansë's poetic approach to the colonial register as instrument of surveillance could stimulate a further cultural reading of such bureaucratic heritage. The colonial archive, the traditional domain of historians, may not answer all our questions about emotions, identity or mobility, as Wagenaar shows, yet it proves to be surprisingly rich in detail at the individual level, if you know your way through its veins.

Women and men like Boenga, Deidami, Amber and Cruz each communicate to us different aspects of life in enslavement. They react to their situations dramatically through escape and rage, but they also move about in taverns, markets and the church, where they meet others—enslaved and free—and make plans or dream of a home across the sea. We may not always know how they became slaves—were they kidnapped, sold by their fathers or mothers, or born into slavery? But we do know that their experiences of being enslaved have been transmitted over generations and shaped culture. The book resists ideas of victimhood and does not aim to foster compassion, a sentiment that, according to Balkenhol, has colonial roots. Instead it calls for more scholarly reflexivity and appeals to public responsibility and political engagement. This book is important not only for what it reveals of the little-known history of enslavement in the Indian Ocean world, but because the colonial past still informs and haunts how we feel and behave in the multicultural realities of Britain, France and the Netherlands today.

Notes

1. We thank the co-authors of this volume, the two peer reviewers, and series editor Tsolin Nalbantian, for their valuable comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this introduction. Harkirat Singh and Doreen van den Boogaart were indispensable in assisting us with research and practical matters during the workshop in Leiden in 2017, out of which this volume took shape. Pouwel van Schooten has done a wonderful job in helping us to edit the volume in its final stage.
2. For a useful discussion on what constitutes slavery see, inter alia, the classic works of Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2018; Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977. For a comprehensive bibliography see Joseph Calder Miller, *Slavery: A Worldwide Bibliography, 1900–1982*. White Plains NY: Kraus International, 1985.
3. Stuart Hall, “When Was the ‘Post-Colonial’?: Thinking at the Limit,” in *The Postcolonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, edited by Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, 247. London: Routledge, 1996.
4. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2009; Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press, 1998; Françoise Vergès, “Les Troubles de la Memoire: Traite Negrière, Esclavage et Écriture de l’Histoire,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 45, no. 179/180 (2005): 1143–1178; Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016.
5. For an impression of this workshop see Doreen van den Boogaart and Harkirat Singh, “Being a Slave: Indian Ocean Slavery in Local Context,” *The IIAS newsletter* 78 (2017): <https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/being-slave-indian-ocean-slavery-local-context>
6. Prosper Eve, *Le corps des esclaves de l’île Bourbon. Histoire d’une reconquête*, Paris, Presse de l’université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2013.
7. L. Raat, *The Life of Governor Joan Gideon Loten (1710-1789): A Personal History of a Dutch Virtuoso*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2010.
8. Gwyn Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. London: Frank Cass, 2004; Anthony Reid and Jennifer Brewster, *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia*.

- St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983; Indrani Chatterjee and Richard Eaton (eds.), *Slavery and South Asian History*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2006.
9. Alessandro Stanziani, *Bondage: Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.
 10. Take, for example, van Delden's description of slavery in A.J. van Delden, "De Sangir-Eilanden in 1825," *Indisch Magazijn* 1(4-6): 356-383; 1 (7-9) 1-32 (1844).
 11. That is not to say that the Europeans were the only traders in slaves. Within these territories under European rule Chinese, Buginese, Gujarati and other slave traffickers were accommodated.
 12. These causes recur in much of the above-mentioned literature: Gwyn Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery*; Reid and Brewster, *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency*; Chatterjee and Eaton (eds.), *Slavery and South Asian History*.
 13. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Slaves and Tyrants: Dutch Tribulations in Seventeenth-Century Mrauk-U," *Journal of Early Modern History* 1, no. 3 (1997): 201.
 14. Nira Wickramasinghe and Alicia Schrikker, "The Ambivalence of Freedom: Slaves in Jaffna (Sri Lanka) in the 17th–19th Centuries," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 78, no 3, (2019): 497-519.
 15. Hans Hägerdal, "The Slaves of Timor: Life and Death on the Fringes of Early Colonial Society," *Itinerario* 32, no. 2 (2010): 19-44; Helen Creese, *Bali in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Ethnographic Accounts of Pierre Dubois*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
 16. Ulbe Bosma, *The Making of a Periphery. How Island Southeast Asia Became a Mass Exporter of Labor*, 55. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
 17. Tatiana Seijas, "The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish Manila: 1580–1640," *Itinerario* 32, no. 1 (2008): 19-38; Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014; Dienke Hondius, Nancy Jouwe, Jennifer Tosch, and Dineke Stam, *Dutch New York Histories: Connecting African, Native American and Slavery Heritage*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2017.
 18. Linda Mbeki and Matthias van Rossum, "Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World: A Study into the Networks and Backgrounds of the Slavers and the Enslaved in South Asia and South Africa," *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 1 (2017): 95-116.
 19. Ulbe Bosma, *The Making of a Periphery*, 55-58.
 20. Allen, *European Slave Trading*; Linda Mbeki and Matthias van Rossum, "Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World: A Study into the Networks and Backgrounds of the Slavers and the Enslaved in South Asia and South Africa,"

- Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 1 (2017): 95; Markus Vink, "The World's Oldest Trade': Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (2003): 131-177.
21. Indrani Chatterjee, "British Abolitionism from the Vantage of Pre-Colonial South Asian Regimes," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. D. Eltis, S. Engerman, S. Drescher, and D. Richardson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 441-465.
 22. Marina Carter and Nira Wickramasinghe, "Forcing the Archive: Involuntary Migrants 'of Ceylon' in the Indian Ocean World of the 18-19th Centuries," *South Asian History and Culture* 9, no. 2 (2018): 194-206.
 23. Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1-2 (2002): 87-109.
 24. Paul E. Lovejoy, "'Freedom Narratives' of Transatlantic Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 1 (March 2011): 91-107.
 25. See, for instance, Vincent Carrera, *Equiano the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*. Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005.
 26. Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters. Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
 27. For an example of legal records creatively used to recreate the lives of enslaved women in India see Sylvia Vatuk, "Bharatee's Death: Domestic Slave-Women in Nineteenth-Century Madras," in *Slavery and South Asian History*, edited by Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton, 210-233. (Bloomington IN: University Press, 2006).
 28. Meghan Vaughn, *Creating the Creole Island*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2005; Marina Carter, *Voices from Indenture: Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire*. London: Leicester University Press, 1996; Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives. Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; see also Anand A. Yang, "Indian Convict Workers in Southeast Asia in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of World History* 24, no. 2 (2003): 179-208.
 29. Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Ronit Ricci, Anand A. Yang and Kieko Matteson (eds.), *Exile in Colonial Asia: Kings, Convicts, Commemoration*. Honolulu HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2016; Michael Laffan, "From Javanese Court to African Grave: How Noriman Became Tuan Skapie, 1717-1806," *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies* 1 (2017): 38-59.
 30. It is not possible to list here the vast body of scholarship on slavery in South Africa. For a few seminal works see Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and*

- Resistance in South Africa*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); Nigel Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, African Studies Series 44, 1985); Robert C.H. Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838*. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994; Sirtjo Koolhof and Robert Ross, “Upas, September and the Bugis at the Cape of Good Hope: The Context of a Slave’s Letter,” *Archipel* 70 (2005): 281–308; Pamela Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823–1853*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 1997.
31. Nigel Worden, “Cape Slaves in the Paper Empire of the VOC,” *Kronos* 40, no. 1 (2014): 27.
 32. Sue Peabody, *Madeleine’s Children: Family, Freedom, Secrets, and Lies in France’s Indian Ocean Colonies*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
 33. Omar H. Ali, *Malik Ambar. Power and Slavery Across the Indian Ocean*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2016.
 34. See Carlo Ginzburg, “Microhistory. Two or three things that I know about it,” *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 10–35.
 35. Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*. Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
 36. Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
 37. This section draws from the forthcoming book, Nira Wickramasinghe, *Slave in a Palanquin. Colonial Servitude and Resistance in Sri Lanka*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.
 38. Alicia Schrikker and Dries Lyna, “Threads of the Legal Web. Dutch Law and Everyday Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Asia,” in *The Uses of Justice in Global Perspective 1600–1900*, edited by Manon Van der Heijden, Griet Vermeesch and Jaco Zuijderduijn, 42–56. London: Routledge, 2019.
 39. Eric Jones, *Wives, Slaves, and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia*. DeKalb IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010; Henk Nie-meijer, *Batavia: Een Koloniale Samenleving in de Zeventiende Eeuw*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2005; Bondan Kanumoyoso, “Beyond the City Wall: Society and Economic Development in the Ommelanden of Batavia, 1684–1740” (PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2011).
 40. See, for instance, the University of Edinburgh AHRC Project, “Becoming ‘Coolies’: Rethinking the Origins of the Indian Ocean Labour Diaspora, 1772–1920,” Arts and Humanities Research Council. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, March 2015–

August 2017; and “Legacy of Slavery and Indentured Labour. Linking the Past with the Future” (presentation, Conference on Slavery, Indentured Labour, Migration, Diaspora and Identity Formation, Paramaribo, Suriname, 19–23 June 2018).

41. Scully, *Liberating the Family*.
42. John Edwin Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection. Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*. Charlottesville VA and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003.
43. See Pamela Scully’ chapter in this volume
44. Maartje Janse, “‘Holland as a Little England’? British Anti-Slavery Missionaries and Continental Abolitionist Movements in the Mid Nineteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 229, no. 1 (November 2015): 123–160, 135. The standard text on debates about Dutch abolitionism is Gert Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later: Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit*. Leiden: KITLV, 1995.
45. Janse, “‘Holland as a Little England’?”. Janse argues that there were more protests than generally assumed.
46. W.R. van Hoëvell, *Slaven en Vrijen Onder de Nederlandsche Wet*. Zaltbommel: Joh. Noman en Zoon, 1855, cited in Paul Bijl, chapter seven in this volume.
47. Markus Balkenhol, “Silence and the Politics of Compassion. Commemorating Slavery in the Netherlands,” *Social Anthropology*, 24, no. 3 (2016): 278.
48. Gabeba Baderoon, “The African Oceans—Tracing the Sea as Memory of Slavery in South African Literature and Culture,” *Research in African Literatures* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 91, 93; Isabel Hofmeyr, “The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South—Literary and Cultural Perspectives,” *Social Dynamics* 33, no. 2 (2007): 13.
49. Gabeba Baderoon, “The African Oceans”; Sowande’ M. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*. Chicago IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016.
50. Françoise Vergès, “A Museum without Objects,” in *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, 25–38, edited by Iain Chambers, Alessandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello and Mariangela Orabona, London: Routledge, 2014.
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52. Nigel Worden, “Indian Ocean Slaves in Cape Town, 1695–1807,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 405.