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Slaves' Stories

Special Issue of Transatlantica Journal

Slaves' Stories, a special issue of Transatlantica, the electronic journal of the French Association for American Studies (Association Française d'Etudes Américaines). Guest editors Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec (Assistant Professor, Université de Sherbrooke, Canada) and Nathalie Dessens (Professor, University of Toulouse, France).

The history of slavery has increasingly revolved in recent years around life stories -- or rather lives' stories -- in a trend that is often close to micro-history. This, in part, seems to be a response to the social and cultural history of slavery - produced from the 70s to the 90s -- that may have, in the end, by-passed the voices of the main actors, the slaves themselves. From Alessandro Stella's book to the work of Paul Lovejoy, to the various projects initiated by the Centre International de Recherche sur les Esclavages (CNRS, France), or to the way the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain was recently brought to memory, the trend has been to go back to the origins, to the slaves' lives, to their daily and peculiar lives. Now is the time, it seems, for ordinary stories, often full of contradictory emotions; now is the time, apparently, for a new historical narrative that places the fragment at the center of the story; a narrative that brings us close to the memorializing task of contemporary actors.

This "Slaves' stories" special issue explores the return to life -- or lives' -- narratives, to that new fabric of personal and familiar stories. All approaches -- empirical, theoretical, and historiographical -- are accepted in this interdisciplinary issue that will welcome studies in literature, history, or anthropology.

Although we mainly expect proposals dealing with the English-speaking world (the United States, Great Britain, and the British Caribbean), we are very favorable to proposals opening the field of investigation to other societies of the Americas concerned by slavery, for instance Brazil or the Spanish and French-speaking Americas (this list is not exhaustive), notably through comparisons.

Among subjects that could be broached are the description of the slaves' living spaces; the Middle Passage (and broader questions of migrations); the
representation of the master/slave or slave/slave power relationships in the literature, daily geography, or pictorial representation of slavery; the way slavery has been depicted in movies, documentaries, or paintings. This special issue is conceived as a privileged place to present (or present again in different forms) various primary sources like slave narratives or neo-slave narratives, planters’ correspondences, testimonies of previously enslaved people, judicial sources, reports of parliamentary or congressional committees, etc. Fields connected with the memorializing of slavery are not excluded from this list.

Proposals of articles, research notes, or documents with a multimedia perspective, must be sent by 15 April 2010 to Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec (j-p.leglaunec@usherbrooke.ca) and Nathalie Dessens (dessens@tlse2.fr). The articles (no longer than 7,000 words, including notes and short bibliography) will have to be received by 15 September 2010 to be sent out to review. Final revised versions of articles accepted after the reviewing process will have to be sent no later than 15 December 2010.