

Elizabeth Swanson, James Brewer Stewart, eds.. *Human Bondage and Abolition: New Histories of Past and Present Slaverys*. Slaverys since Emancipation Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 376 pp. \$99.95, cloth, ISBN 978-1-107-18662-0.

Reviewed by Andrew J. Kettler

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Commissioned by Gemma Masson (University of Birmingham)

Human Bondage and Abolition, a recent edition in the Slaverys since Emancipation series from Cambridge University Press, considers whether comparisons between past slavery and current systems of slavery obscure or illuminate the goals of anti-slavery in the contemporary world. The editors, Elizabeth Swanson and James Brewer Stewart, have collected essays that expose different aspects of this often troubling comparison. The work begins with an important preface from David Blight that uses the figures of French historian Marc Bloch and Nigerian-born writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to discuss the importance of using forms of history for activist goals. The editors follow with a lengthy introduction to the three sections of their volume. Their synopsis presents current tactics of the anti-slavery movement that hope to free the over forty-six million contemporary slaves estimated by the Global Slavery Index of 2016.

In their introduction, Swanson and Stewart argue that modern slavery has nearly nothing in common with the chattel slavery that dominated the Atlantic World. However, despite the lack of mutual practices, the manner in which past slaverys were defeated can often inform modern movements. Even with this open activist space, the editors note that their authors are frequently

forced to contend with mercurial terminology to walk a fine line between concluding that using history occludes modern abolitionist movements and contending that the use of history can assist with modern abolitionism. To clarify this debate, the editors apply Joseph Miller's broad gerund of "slaving" as a way to draw comparisons between abolitionist movements against chattel slavery and current goals against human trafficking.

David Richardson starts the first section with a secondary introduction that counters the general assessment that there is little comparable between modern and chattel slavery. He examines diverse histories of slavery to show how past accounts can educate activists to challenge illegal forms of current slaving. Richardson exposes numerous case studies from the modern world, pointing to questions of the different historical scales of slavery, the diverse geographies of slavery, and the excessive cruelty of human trafficking. To continue the first section, James Sidbury offers a historiographical foray into questions of civic death. Exploring methods of control applied by slaveholders and modern traffickers alike, Sidbury uses exploitation as a key term for discovering similarities between social death in chattel slavery and the regulation over bodies and minds within modern slaverys. Consequently, Sidbury

presents an important discussion of the blurred lines between slavery and freedom that existed within chattel systems and in the modern world, even as many activists disengage the use of past slavery because of the memory of a falsely singular antebellum plantation paradigm. The following chapter from Allison Mileo Gorsuch engages legal questions of anti-slavery in the nineteenth century to conclude that modern movements must enforce existing laws. Gorsuch then probes the case of *United States v. Kozminski* (1988), the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and *United States v. Kaufman* (2008) to clarify legal terminology while concluding that anti-slavery activists should avoid using comparisons to past slaveries in favor of developing precedent that more correctly defines present human trafficking and labor exploitation.

Following the editors' aspiration to look into the everyday practices of past and present slaveries, John Donoghue begins the second section by exploring the forms of kidnapping that took laborers into the Atlantic World while showing how those patterns are similar to modern slaving. Specifically highlighting the importance of trafficking networks, Donoghue locates the kidnapers, or spirits, who took countless bodies from European ports into the Atlantic World, portraying that labor acquisition was never fully legal. This chapter highlights the organized crime syndicates that spirited away laborers in the past through comparisons to the spiriting away of contract laborers into the horrific bondages of the modern world, often created by corporate outsourcing of labor procurement to subsidiaries like the engineering firm Kellogg, Brown and Root. Continuing analysis of practice, Kerry Ward looks at the specific roles of maritime traders within both past and present slaveries. Using the *Trafficking in Persons Report* (2012), Ward reads case studies regarding the shipping of slaves in the modern world alongside the trafficking of slaves like Solomon Northrup during the antebellum era. Like the spiriting that Donoghue discusses, Ward

explores the modern idea of shanghaiing, or maritime kidnapping, for labor on the high seas.

Anne Ma Duane continues the second section on everyday practice with her comparison of childhood enslavement within American slavery, through a reading of Frederick Douglass, to modern issues of childhood slavery, sex trafficking, and citizenship. The terms of profitability offer Duane a way to clarify how child slavery existed within historical settings and continues to expand. Jessica Pliley follows with an analysis on the rhetoric of sex trafficking in the modern world. Exposing a debate between anti-sex trafficking activists and their opponents, Pliley looks at a history of engagements against white slavery in the West. Examining a common trajectory from exposure to reform, Pliley judges the modern anti-trafficking movement as still buying into much-too-vague language that frequently limits female agency.

The final section looks at how history is rhetorically applied within modern anti-slavery movements. Dave Blair compares the British campaigns against foreign slave traders in the nineteenth century to modern transnational efforts to limit illegal trading throughout the developing world. Exploring individual efforts within the West Africa Squadron, Blair highlights the importance of human agency to lead efforts to combat modern cyberspace trading of slaves as compared to the webbed networks of the Atlantic World. The penultimate chapter, from the editors, explores a discussion of human rights within abolitionist rhetoric, whereby the authors offer a comparison between the language used by antebellum slaveholders to evade moral questions and the use of justifications of free trade and paternalism used by modern proponents of sex trafficking. The final chapter, from Stewart and Monti Narayan Darta, offers a reading of the events of Charlottesville in the summer of 2017 through exploring the importance of deconstructing neo-Confederate

memory as a means to decompose global slaveries.

The collection presents both supporters and detractors of the idea that current anti-slavery discussions can be informed by historical abolitionist movements. Generally, the volume lacks attention to nationalism within either historical or contemporary settings. This wanting investigation may prove detrimental to the lasting power of the activist edition, especially as the burdens of growing populism and ethnic nationalism may impede the many attempts to grow transnational efforts against slaving in the modern world. Despite that open analytical space, the book is an important contribution to historical activist literature on discussions of slaving in the modern world and should be read by both current activists and scholars of historical slavery.

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